EPTEMBER 1920 25¢

Everybody's Magazine

Short Stories

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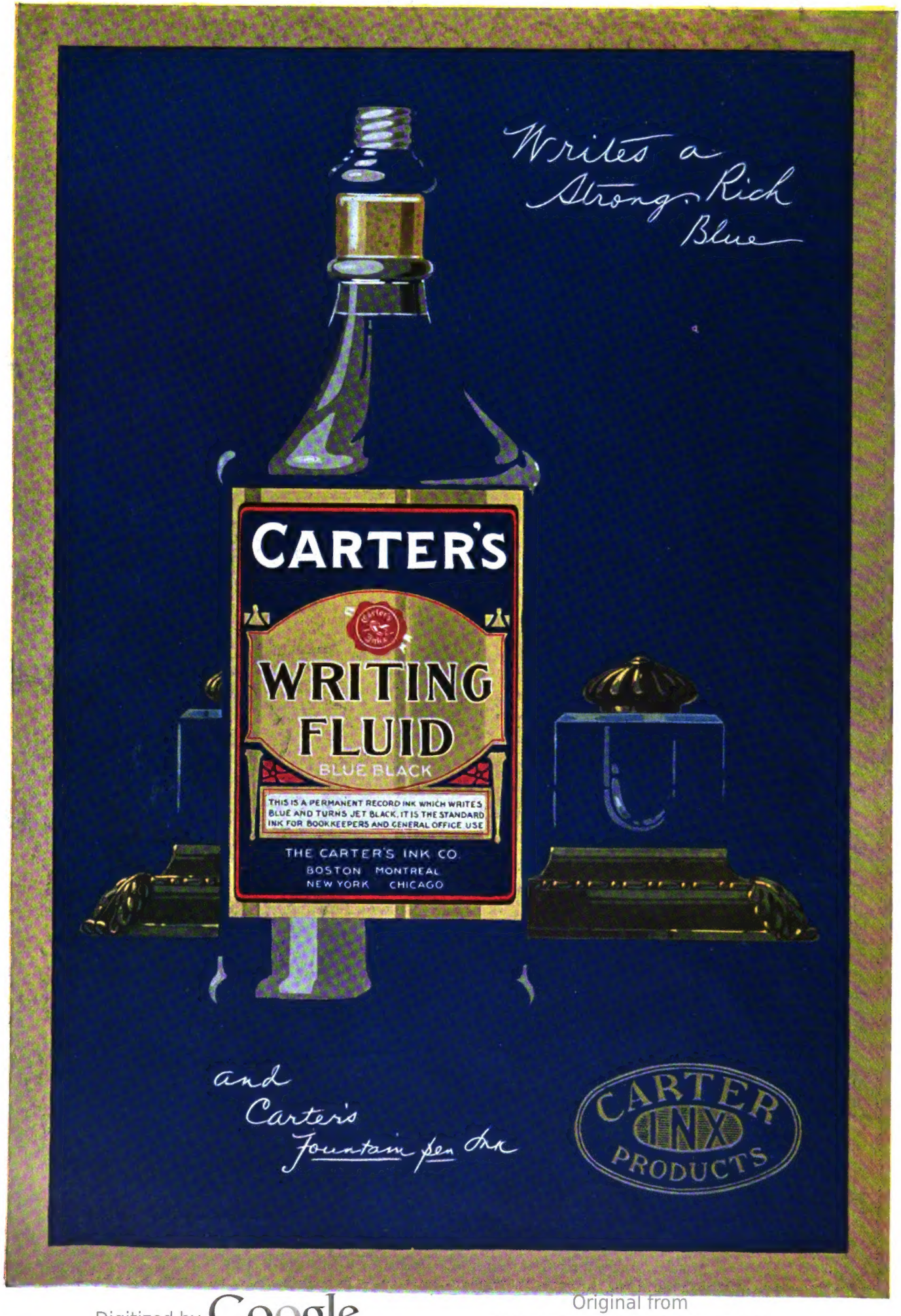
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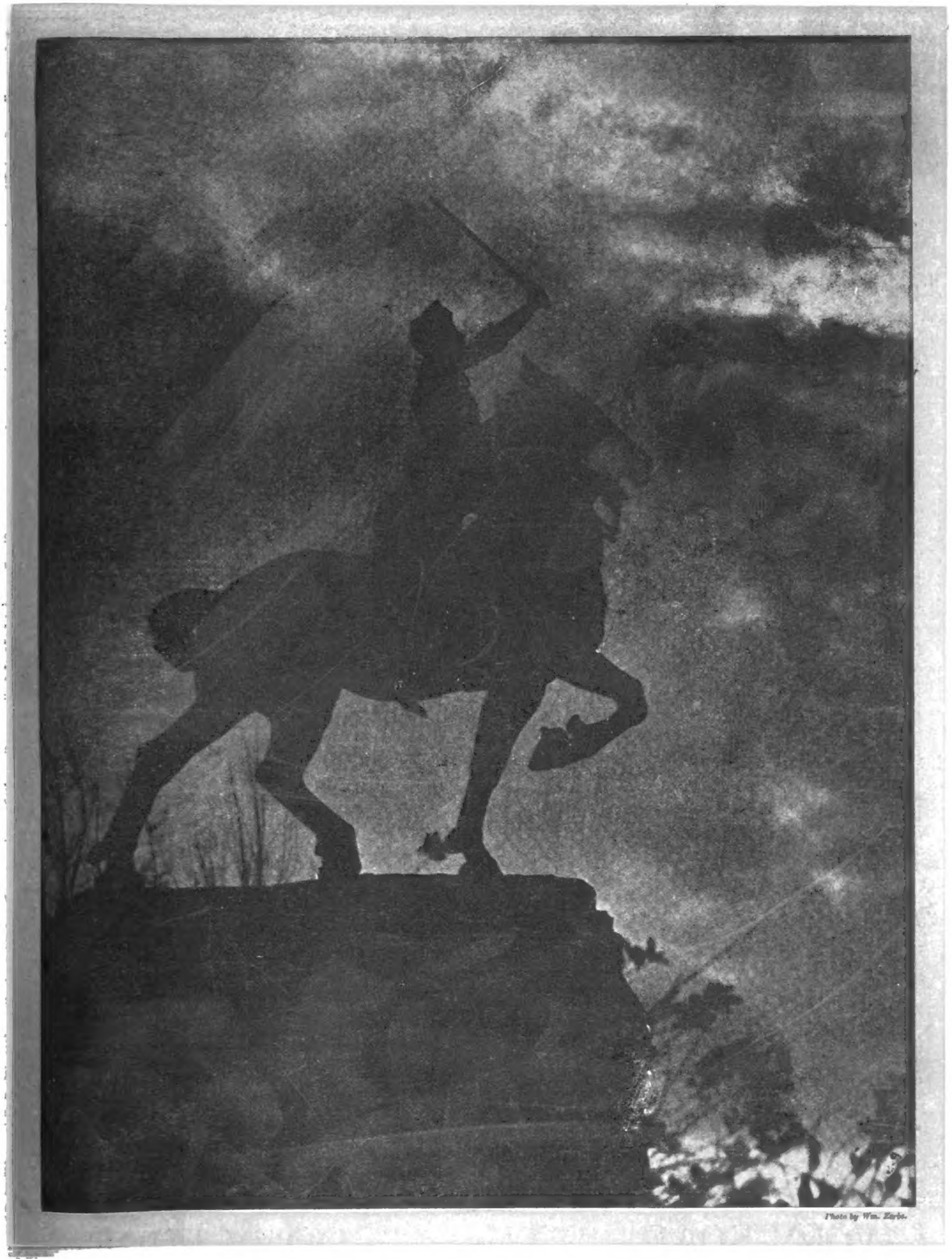

The New Saint of Old France.

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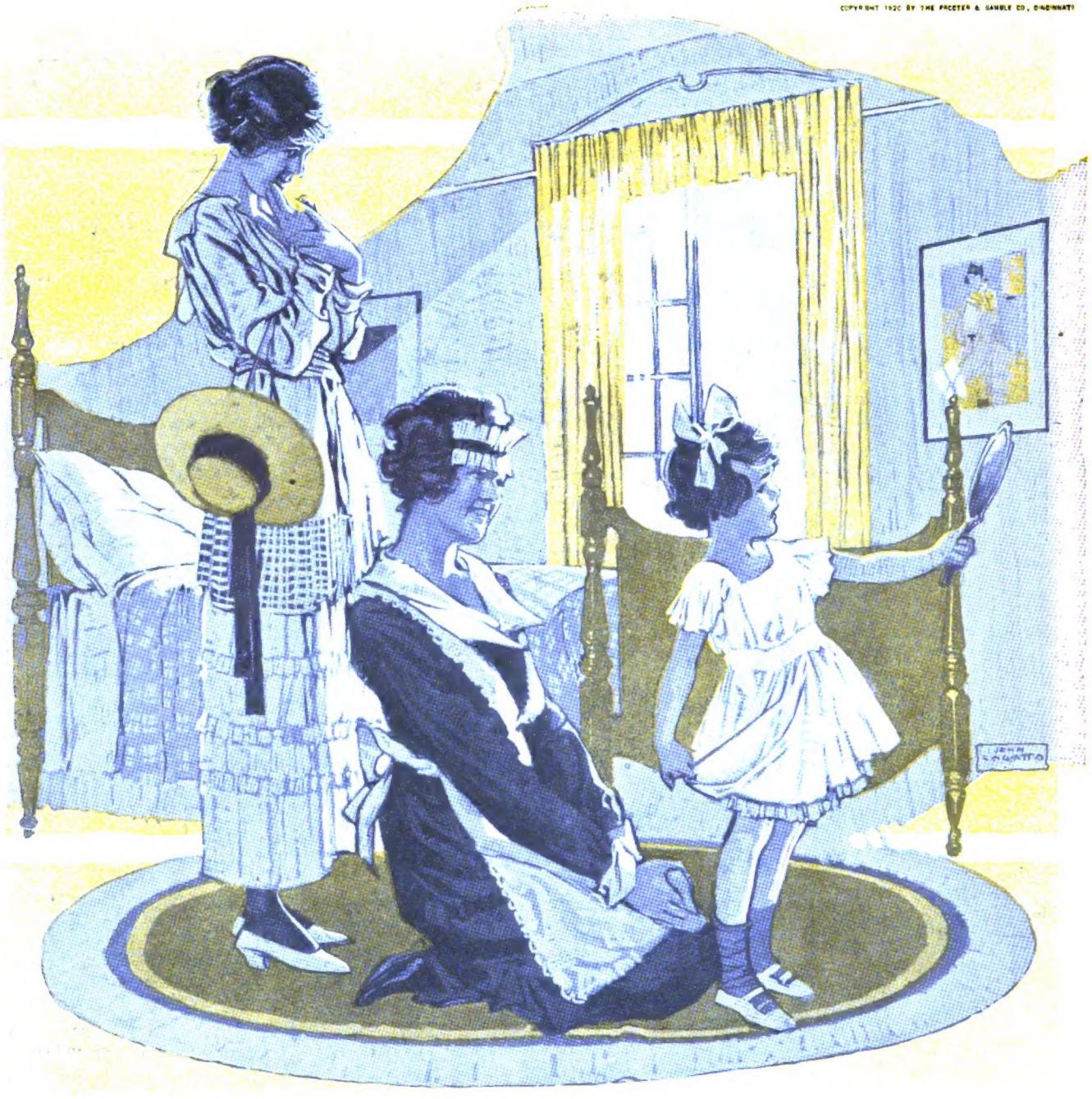

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Everybody's Magazine

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In Red and Gold

A Romance of the Greatest River

By Samuel Merwin

Author of "Temperamental Henry," "The Hills of Han," etc.

The viceroy was advancing toward them . . . .

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Here begins a magical story of the seething, changing modern Orient—a story not only filled with the glamorous color and mystery of the East, by one who has saturated himself with them, but edged with a tense and moving stream of adventure, told by one who has won a front place in American fiction as a story-teller. The little group of people he has created here—each a living and familiar figure—will hold you month after month as they float into the restless heart of China on the bosom of the Greatest River—the Yangtze Kiang.

CHAPTER ONE

Fellow Voyagers

ON A night in October, 1911, the river steamer *Yen Hsin* lay alongside the godown, or warehouse, of the China Merchants' Navigation Company at Shanghai. Her black hull bulked large in the darkness that was spotted with inadequate electric lights. Her white cabins, above, lighted here and there, loomed high and ghostly, extending as far as the eye could easily see from the narrow wharf beneath. Swarming continuously across the gangplanks, chanting rhythmically to keep the quick shuffling step, crews of coolies carried heavy boxes and bales swung from bamboo poles.

During the evening the white passengers were coming aboard by ones and twos and finding their cabins, all of which were forward on the promenade deck, grouped about the enclosed area that was to be at once their dining-room and "social hall." Here, within a narrow space, bounded by strips of outer deck and a partition wall, these casual passengers were to be caught in a sort of passing comradeship. For the greater part of this deck, amidships and aft, was screened off for the use of traveling Chinese officials, and the two lower decks would be crowded with lower-class natives and freight.

And, not unnaturally, in the minds of nearly all the white folk, as they settled for the night, arose questions as to the others aboard. For strange beings of many nations dig a footing of sorts on the China coast, and odd contrasts occur

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when any few are thrown together by a careless fate. And so, thinking variously in their separate cabins of the meeting to come, at breakfast about the single long table, and of the nearly five days of voyaging into the heart of oldest China, these passengers, one by one, fell asleep. Through open shutters floated quaint odors and sounds from the tangle of sampans and slipper boats that always line the curving bund, and occasional shouts and songs from late revellers passing along the boulevard beyond the rows of trees.

IT WAS well after midnight when the *Yen Hsin* drew in her lines and swung off into the narrow channel of the Whampoa. Drifting sampans, without lanterns, scurried out of her path. With an American captain on the strip of promenade deck, forward, that served for a bridge, a yellow pilot, and Scotch engineers below decks, she slipped down with the tide, past the roofed-over opium hulks that were anchored out there, past the dimly outlined stone buildings of the British and American quarter, on into the broader Wusung. Here a German mail liner lay at anchor, lighted from stem to stern. Farther down were three American cruisers; and below these a junk, drifting dimly by with ribbed sails flapping and without the sign of a light, built high astern, like the ghost of a medieval trader.

"There's his lights now." Thus the captain to a huge figure of a man who stood, stooping a little, beside him, peering out at the river. And the captain, a stocky little man with hands in the pockets of a heavy jacket, added—"the dirty devil."

Indeed, a small green light showed now on the junk's beam; and then she was gone astern.

After a silence, the captain said: "You may as well turn in."

"Perhaps I will," replied the other. "Though I get a good deal more sleep than I need on the river. And very little exercise."

"That's the devil of this life of course. Look a' me—I'm fat!" The captain spoke in a rough, faintly blustering tone, perhaps in a nervous response to the well-modulated voice of his mate. "Must make even more difference to you—the way you've lived. And at that, after all, you ain't a slave to the river."

"No in a sense, I'm not." The mate fell silent. There were, of course, vast differences in the degrees of misfortune among the flotsam and jetsam of the coast. Captain Benjamin now, had a native wife and five or six half caste children tucked away somewhere in the Chinese city of Shanghai.

"We've got quite a bunch aboard this trip," offered the captain.

"Indeed?"

"One or two well-known people. There's our American millionaire, Dawley Kane. Took four outside cabins. His son's with him, and a secretary, and a Japanese that's been up with him before. Wonder if it's a pleasure trip—or if it means that the Kane interests are getting hold up the river. It might, at that. They bought the Cantey line, you know, in nineteen-eight. Then there's Tex Connor and his side-kick, the Manila kid, a couple of women schoolteachers from home, and six or eight others—customs men and casuals. And Dixie Carmichael—she's aboard. Quite a bunch! And His Nibs gets on to-morrow morning at Nanking."

The light fell full on an oval face that was brightly painted, red and white, beneath glossy black hair . . . .

"T'ang, you mean?"

"The same. There's a story that he's ordered up to Peking. They were talking about it yesterday at the office."

"Do you think he's in trouble?"

"Can't say. But if you ask me, it don't look like such a good time to be easy on these agitators, now does it?"

The mate stood musing, holding to the rail. "It's a problem," he replied, after a little, rather absently.

"The funny thing is—he ain't going on through. Not this trip, anyhow. We're ordered to put him off at his old place, this side of Huang Chau. Have to use the boats. You might give them a look-see."

"They've gossiped about T'ang before this at Shanghai."

"Shanghai," cried the captain with nervous irrelevancy, "is full of information about China—and it's all wrong!" He added then, "Seen young Black lately?"

The mate moved his head in the negative.

"Consul-general sent him down from Hankow, after old Ch'ang stopped down that native paper of his. I ran into him yesterday, over the bank. He says the revolution's going to break before summer."

The mate made no reply to this. Every trip the captain talked in this manner. His one deep fear was that the outbreak might take place while he was far up the river.

It had been supposed by all experienced spectators of the Chinese scene, that the Manchu dynasty would not long survive the famous old empress dowager, the vigorous and imperious little woman who was known throughout a rational and tolerant empire, not without a degree of affection, as "the Old Buddha."

At the time of the present narrative she had been dead two years and more; the daily life of the infant emperor was in the control of a new empress dowager, that Lung Yu who was notoriously overriding the regent and dictating such policies of government as she chose in the intervals between protracted periods of palace revelry. The one really powerful personage in Peking that year was the chief eunuch, Chang Yuan-fu, a former actor, notoriously the empress's personal favorite, who catered to her pleasures, robbed the imperial treasury of vast sums, wreaked ugly vengeance on critical censors, and publicly insulted dukes of the royal house.

All this was familiar. The Manchu strain had dwindled out; and while an empress pleased her jaded appetites by having an actor cut with the lash in her presence for an indifferent performance, all South China, from Canton to the

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Yangtze, seethed with the steadily increasing ferment of revolution. Conspirators ranged the river and the coast. At the secret meetings in Singapore, Tokio, San Francisco and New York, new and bloody history was planned. The oldest and hugest of empires was like a vast crater that steamed and bubbled faintly here and there as hot, vital forces accumulated beneath.

The mate, pondering the incalculable problem, finally spoke.

"I suppose, if this revolt should bring serious trouble to T'ang, it might affect you and me as well."

The captain flared up, the blustering note rising higher in his voice. "But somebody'll have to run the boats, won't they?"

"If they run at all."

His impersonal tone seemed to irritate further the captain's troubled spirit. "If they run at all, eh? It's all right for you—you can go it alone—you haven't got children on your mind—young ones!"

The big man was silent again. A great hand gripped a stanchion tightly as he gazed out at the dark expanse of water.

The captain, glancing around at him, looking a second time at that hand, turned away, with a little sound.

"I will say good night," remarked the mate, abruptly and left his chief to his uncertain thoughts.

THE steamer moved deliberately out into the wide estuary of the Yangtze, that is at this point like a sea. Squatting at the edge of the deck, outside the rail, the pilot spoke musically to the Chinese quartermaster. Slowly, a little at a time, as she plowed the ruffling water, the steamer swung off to the northwest to begin her long journey up the mighty river to Hankow, where the passengers would change for the smaller Ichang steamer, or for the express to Peking over the still novel trunk railway. And if, as happened not infrequently the *Yen Hsin* should break down or stick in the mud, the Peking passengers would wait a week about the round stove in the old Astor House at Hankow for the next express.

A mighty river, indeed, is the Yangtze. During half the year battle-ships of reasonably deep draft may reach Hankow. In the heyday of the sailing trade clippers out of New York and blunt lime-juicers out of Liverpool were any-day sights from the bund there. Through a busy and not seldom bloody century the merchants of a clamorous outside world have roved the great river (where yellow merchants of the Middle Kingdom, in sampan, barge and junk, roved fifty centuries before them) with rich cargoes of tea (in leaden chests that bore quaint ideographs on the enclosing matting), with hides and horns and coal from Hupeh and furs and musk from faraway Szechuan, with soya-beans and rice and bristles and nutgalls and spices and sesamum, with varnish and tung oil and vegetable tallow, with cotton, ramie, rape and hemp, with copper, quicksilver, slate, lead and antimony, with porcelains and silk.

Along this river that to-day divides an Empire into two vast and populous domains, a thousand thousand fortunes have been gained and lost, rebellions and wars have raged, famines have blighted whole peoples. Forts, pagodas and palaces have lined its banks. The gilded barges of emperors have drifted idly on its broad bosom. Exquisite painted beauties have found mirrors in its neighboring canals. Its waters drain to-day the dusty red plain where Lady Ch'en, the Helen of China, rocked a throne and died.

II

THE morning sun rode high. Soft-footed cabin stewards in blue robes removed the long red tablecloth and laid a white. By ones and twos the passengers appeared from their cabins or from the breezy deck and took their seats, eyeing one another with guarded curiosity as they bowed a morning greeting.

Miss Andrews, of Indianapolis, stepped out from her cabin through a narrow corridor, and then, at sight of the table, stopped short, while her color rose slightly. Miss Andrews was slender, a year or so under thirty, and, in a colorless way, pretty. Shy and sensitive, the picture before her was one her mind's eye had failed to picture; the seats about the long table were half filled, and entirely with men. She saw, in that one quick look, the face of a young German between those of two Englishmen. A remarkably thin man in a check suit looked up and for an instant fixed furtive eyes on hers. Just beyond him sat a big man, with a round wooden face and one glass eye; he turned his head with his eyes to look at her.

A quiet man of fifty-odd, with gray hair, a nearly white mustache that was cropped close, and the expression of quiet satisfaction that only wealth and settled authority can give, was putting a spoonful of condensed milk into his coffee. Next to him sat a young man—very young, certainly not much more than twenty or twenty-one—perhaps his son (the aquiline nose and slightly receding but wide, forehead were the same) rubbing out a cigaret on his butter-plate. He had been smoking before breakfast. She remembered them now; they had been at the Astor House in Shanghai; they were the Kanes, of New York, the famous Kanes. They called the son, "Rocky"—Rocky Kane.

Unable to take in more, Miss Andrews stepped back a little way into the corridor, deciding to wait for her traveling companion, Miss Means, of South Bend. She could hardly go out there alone and sit down with all those men.

BUT just then a door opened and closed; and across the way, coming directly, easily, out into the dining-room, Miss Andrews beheld the surprising figure of a slim girl—or a girl she appeared at first glance—of nineteen or twenty, wearing a blue middy blouse and short blue skirt. Her black hair was drawn loosely together at the neck and tied with a bow of black ribbon. Her somewhat pale face, with its thin line of a mouth, straight, curving black eyebrows and oddly pale eyes, was in some measure attractive. She took her seat at the table without hesitation, acknowledging the reserved greetings of various of the men with a slight inclination of the head.

It seemed to Miss Andrews that she might now go on in there. But the thought that some of these men had surely noted her confusion was disconcerting; and so it was a relief to hear Miss Means pattering on behind her. For that firmly thin little woman had fought life to a standstill and now, excepting in the moments of prim severity that came unaccountably into possession of her thoughts, found it dryly amusing. They took their seats, these two little ladies, Miss Means laying her copy of "Things Chinese" beside her coffee cup; and Miss Andrews tried to bow her casual goodmornings as the curious girl in the middy blouse had done. The girl, by the way, seemed a very little older at close view.

Miss Andrews stole glimpses, too, at young Mr. Rocky Kane. He was a handsome boy, with thick chestnut hair from which he had not wholly succeeded in brushing the curl; but she was not sure that she liked the flush on his cheeks, or the nervous brightness of the eyes, or the expression about the mouth. There had been stories floating about the hotel in Shanghai. He plainly lacked discipline. And she thought that he might easily fascinate a certain sort of woman.

A door opened, and in from the deck came an extraordinarily tall man, stooping as he entered. On his cap, in gilt, was lettered, "1st Mate." He took the seat opposite Mr. Kane, senior, next to the head of the table. It seemed to Miss Andrews that she had never seen so tall a man; he must have stood six feet five or six inches. He was solid, broad of shoulders, a magnificent specimen of manhood. And though the hair was thin on top of his head, and his grave quiet face exhibited the deep lines of middle age, he moved with almost the springy step of a boy. If others at the table were difficult to place on the scale of life, this mate was the

. . . . a large grinning yellow man. . . . .

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most difficult of all. With that strong, reflective face, and the bearing of one who knows only good manners (though he said nothing at all after his first courteously spoken, "Good morning!") he could not have been other than a gentleman—Miss Andrews felt that—an American gentleman! Yet his position—mate of a river steamer in China!

The atmosphere about the table was constrained throughout the meal. The Chinese stewards padded softly about. The one-eyed man stared about the table without the slightest expression on his impassive face. The girl in the middy blouse kept her head over her plate. Miss Andrews once caught Rocky Kane glancing at her with an expression nearly as furtive as that of the thin man in the check suit. It was after this small incident that he began helping Miss Andrews herself to this and that; and, when they rose, followed her out to her deck chair and insisted on tucking her up in her robe.

"These autumn breezes are sometimes pretty sharp on the river," he said. "But say, maybe it isn't hot in summer!"

"I suppose it is," murmured Miss Andrews.

"I've been out here a couple of times with the pater. You'll find the river interesting. Oh, not down here"—he indicated the wide expanse of muddy water and the low-lying, distant shore—"but beyond Chinkiang and Nanking, where it's narrower. Lots of quaint sights. The ports are really fascinating. We stop a lot, you know. At Wuhu the water beggars come out in tubs."

"In tubs!" breathed Miss Andrews.

Miss Means joined them then, book under arm; and met his offer to tuck her up with a crisp y pointed, "No, thank you!"

He soon drifted away.

Said Miss Andrews: "Weren't you a little hard on him, Gerty?"

"My dear," replied Miss Means severely—her Puritan vein strongly uppermost—"that young man won't do. Not at all. I saw him myself, one night at the Astor House, going into one of those private dining-rooms with a woman who—well her character, or lack of it, was unmistakable! Right there in the hotel under his father's eyes. That's what too much money will do to a young man, if you ask me!"

"Oh," breathed Miss Andrews, looking out with startled eyes at the gulls.

A long row of baskets appeared at the rail.

III

IT WAS mid-afternoon when Captain Benjamin remarked to his first mate—

"Tex Connor's got down to work, Mr. Doane. Better try to stop it, if you don't mind. They're in young Kane's cabin—sixteen."

Number sixteen was the last cabin aft on the port side, next the canvas screen that separated upper-class white from upper-class yellow. The wooden shutters had been drawn over the windows and the light turned on within. Cigaret smoke drifted thickly out.

They were slow to open. Doane heard the not unfamiliar voice of the Manila Kid advising against it.

They were crowded together in the narrow space between berth and couch, a board across their knees—Connor twisting his head to fix his one eye on the intruder, the Kid in his check suit, a German of the customs and Rocky Kane. There were cards, chips, and a heap of money in American and English notes and gold.

"What is it?" cried Kane. "What do you want?"

"You'd better stop this," said the mate, quietly.

"Oh come, we're just having a friendly game! What right have you to break into a private room, anyway?"

The mate, stooping within the doorway, took the boy in with thoughtful eyes, but did not reply directly.

Connor, with another look upward, picked up the cards, and with the uncanny mental quickness of a practised croupier redistributed the heap of money to its original owners, and squeezed out without a word, the mate moving aside for him. The German left sulkily. The Kid snapped his fingers in disgust, and followed.

Doane was moving away when the Kid caught his elbow. He asked—

"Did Benjamin send you around?"

Doane inclined his head.

"Running things with a pretty high hand, you and him!"

"Keep away from that boy," was the quiet reply.

The thin man looked up at the grave, strong face above the massive shoulders; hesitated; walked away.

The mate was again about to leave when young Kane spoke. He was in the doorway now, leaning there, hands in pockets, his eyes blazing with indignation and injured pride.

"Those men were my guests!" he cried.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Kane, to disturb your private affairs, but——"

"Why did you do it, then?"

"The captain will not allow Tex Connor to play cards on this boat. At least, not without a fair warning."

The boy's face pictured the confusion in his mind, as he wavered from anger through surprise into youthful curiosity.

"Oh," he murmured, "Oh, so that's Tex Connor!"

"Yes. And Jim Watson with him. He was cashiered from the army in the Philippines. He is generally known now, along the coast, as the Manila Kid."

"So that's Tex Connor! He managed the North End Sporting in London, three years ago."

"Very likely. I believe he is known in London and Paris."

"He's a professional gambler, then?"

"I am not undertaking to characterize him. But if you would accept a word of advice——"

"I haven't asked for it, that I'm aware of."

An instant after he had said this, the boy's face changed. He looked up at the immense frame of the man before him, and into the grave face. The warm color came into his own.

"Oh, I'm sorry!" he cried. "I needn't have said that." But confusion still lay behind that immature face. The very presence of this big man affected him to a degree wholly out of keeping with the fellow's station in life, as he saw it. But he clearly needn't have been rude. "Look here, are you going to say anything to my father?"

"Certainly not."

"Will the captain?"

"You will have to ask him yourself. Though you could hardly expect to keep it from him long, at this rate."

"WELL—he's so busy! He shuts himself up all day with Braker, his secretary. The chap with the big spectacles. You see." Kane laughed self-consciously—a naively boyish quality in him kept him talking more eagerly than he knew—"the pater's reached the stage when he feels he ought to put himself right before the world. I guess he's been a great old pirate, the pater—you know, wrecking railroads and grabbing banks and going into combinations. Though it's just what all the others have done. From what I've heard about some of them—friends of ours, too! You have to, nowadays, in business. No place for little men or soft men. It's a two-fisted game. This fellow spent a couple of years writing the pater's autobiography—seems funny, doesn't it—and they're going over it together on this trip. That's why Braker came along; there's no time at home. The plan this year was to have Braker tutor me. That was after I broke out of college. But Lord!"

"You'll excuse me now," said the mate.

Meantime the Manila Kid had sidled up to the captain.

"Say Cap," he observed, cautiously,

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"wha'd you come down on Tex like that for?"

"Oh come," replied the captain testily, not turning, "don't bother me!"

"But what you expect us to do all this week on the river—play jackstraws?"

"I don't care what you do! Some trips they get up deck games."

"Deck games!" The Kid sniffed.

"You'll find plenty to read in the library."

"Read!"

"Then I guess you'll just have to stand it."

For some time they stood side by side without speaking. The captain eyeing the river, the Kid moodily observing water buffalo bathing near the bank.

"Tex has got that Chinese heavyweight of his aboard—down below."

"Oh—that Tom Sung?"

"Yep. Knocked out Bull Kennedy in three rounds at the Shanghai Sporting. Got some matches for him up at Peking and Tientsin. Taking him over to Japan after that. There's an American marine that's cleaned up three ships." He was silent for a space; then added, "I suppose, now, if we was to arrange a little boxing entertainment, you wouldn't stand for that either, eh?"

"Oh, that's all right. Take the social hall if the ladies don't object. But who would you put up against him."

"Well—if we could find a young fellow on board, Tex could tell Tom to go light."

"You might ask Mr. Doane. He complains he ain't getting exercise enough."

"He's pretty old—still, I'd hate to go up against him myself. Say, you ask him, cap!"

"I'll think it over. He's a little—— I'll tell you now he wouldn't stand for your making a show of it. If he did it, it 'ud just be for exercise."

"Oh, that's all right!"

The little Manchu girl had found a friend in Mr. Rocky Kane.

IV

MISS MEANS awoke with a start. It was the second morning out, at sunrise. The engines were still, but from without an extraordinary hubbub rent the air. Drums were beating, reed instruments wailing in weird dissonance, and innumerable voices chattering and shouting. A sudden crackling suggested firecrackers in quantity.

Miss Means raised herself on one elbow, and saw her roommate peeping out over the blind.

"What is it?" she asked.

"It looks very much like the real China we've read about," replied Miss Andrews, raising her voice above the din. "It's certainly very different from Shanghai."

The steamer lay alongside a landing hulk, at the foot of broad steps. Warehouses crowded the bank and the bund above, some of Western construction; but the crowded scene on hulk and steps and bund, and among the matting-roofed sampans, hundreds of which were crowded against the bank, was wholly Oriental. From every convenient mast and pole, pennants and banners spread their dragons on the fresh early breeze.

A temporary pailow, or archway, at the top of the steps was gay with fresh paint and streamers. In the air above were scores of kites, designed and painted to represent dragons and birds of prey, which the owners were maneuvring in mimic aerial warfare; swooping and darting and diving. As Miss Means looked one huge painted bird fell in shreds to a neighboring roof, and the swarming assemblage cheered.

Soldiers were marching in good-humored disorder down the bund, in the inevitable faded blue with blue turbans tied about their heads. It appeared as if not another person could force his way onto the hulk without crowding at least one of its occupants into the water, yet on they came; and so far as our two little ladies could see, none fell. Fully two hundred of the soldiers there were, with short rifles and bayonets. Amid great confusion they formed a lane down the steps and across to the gangway.

Next came a large, bright-colored sedan chair slung on cross-poles, with eight bearers, and with groups of silk-clad mandarins walking before and behind. Farther back, swaying along, were other chairs, each with but four bearers; eight or ten more of them, each tightly closed, waiting in line as the chair of the great one was set carefully down on the wharf and opened by the attending officials.

Deliberately, smilingly, the great one stepped out. He was a man of perhaps seventy, with a drooping gray mustache and narrow chin beard of gray that contrasted oddly with the long black cue. His robe was black, with a square bit of embroidery in rich color on the breast. Above his hat of office a huge round ruby stood high on a gold mount, and a peacock feather slanted down behind it.

Bowing to right and left, he ascended the gang plank, the mandarins following. There were fifteen of these, each with a round button on his plumed hat—those in the van, of red coral, the others of sapphire and lapis lazuli, rock crystal, nephrite and gold.

One by one the lesser chairs were brought out on the wharf and opened. From the first stepped a stout woman of mature years, richly clad in heavily embroidered silks, with loops of pearls about her neck and shoulders, and with painted face under the elaborately built-up head-dress. Other women of various ages followed, less conspicuously clad. From the last chair—it was the eleventh—appeared a young woman, slim and graceful even in the enveloping silks, her face, like the others, a mask of white paint and rouge, with lips heavily carmined into a perfect cupid's bow. And with her, clutching her hand, was a little girl of six or seven, who laughed merrily upward at the great steamer as she trotted along.

Blue clad servants followed, a hundred or more, and swarming, cackling women with unpainted faces and flapping black trousers, and porters—long lines of porters with boxes and bales and bundles swung from the inevitable bamboo poles.

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. . . . Connor, twisting his head to fix his eye on the intruder.

At last they were all aboard, and the steamer moved out.

"Who were all those women, in the chairs. do you suppose?" asked Miss Andrews.

"His wives, probably."

"Oh!"

"Or concubines."

Miss Andrews was silent. She could still see the waving crowd on the wharf, and the banners and kites.

"He must be at least a prince, with all that retinue."

Miss Andrews, thinking rapidly of Aladdin and Marco Polo, of wives and concubines and strange barbarous ways, brought herself to say in a nearly matter-of-fact voice: "But those women all had natural feet. I don't understand."

Miss Means reached for her "Things Chinese;" looked up "Feet," "Women," "Dress," and other headings; finally found an answer, through a happy inspiration, under "Manchus."

"That's it!" she explained; and read—"The Manchus do not bind the feet of their women."

"Well!" Thus Miss Andrews, after a long moment with more than a hint of emotional stir in her usually quiet voice—"We certainly have a remarkable assortment of fellow passengers. That curious silent girl in the middy blouse—traveling alone."

"Remarkable, and not altogether edifying," remarked the practical Miss Means.

CHAPTER TWO
Between the Worlds

I

TOWARD noon Miss Means and Miss Andrews were in their chairs on deck, when a gay little outburst of laughter caught their attention, and around the canvas screen came running the child they had seen on the wharf at Nanking. A sober Chinese servant (Miss Means and Miss Andrews were not to know that he was a eunuch) followed at a more dignified pace.

The child was dressed in a quilted robe of bright flowered silk, the skirt flaring like a bell about the ankles, the sleeves extending down over the hands. Her shoes were high, of black cloth with paper soles. Over the robe she wore a yellow vest, short-sleeved, trimmed with ribbon and fastened with gilt buttons. Over her head and shoulders was a hood of fox skin worn with the fur inside, tied with ribbons under the chin, and decorated, on the top of the head, with the eyes, nose and ears of a fox. As she scampered along the deck she lowered her head and charged at the big first mate. He smiled, caught her shoulders, spun her about, and set her free again; then, nodding pleasantly to the eunuch, he passed on.

Before the two ladies he paused to say: "We are coming into T'aiping, the city that gave a name to China's most terrible rebellion. If you care to step around to the other side, you'll see something of the quaint life along the river."

"He seems very nice—the mate," remarked Miss Andrews. "I find myself wondering who he may have been. He is certainly a gentleman."

"I understand," replied Miss Means, coolly, "that one doesn't ask that question on the China coast."

They found the old river port drab and dilapidated, yet rich in the color of teeming human life. The river, as usual, was crowded with small craft. Nearly a score of these were awaiting the steamer, each evidently housing an entire family under its little arch of matting, and each extending bamboo poles with baskets at the ends. As the steamer came to a stop, a long row of these baskets appeared at the rail, while cries and songs arose from the water.

The little Manchu girl had found a friend in Mr. Rocky Kané. He was holding her on the rail and supplying her with brass cash which she dropped gaily into the baskets. The eunuch stood smiling by.

After tiffin the child appeared again and sought her new friend. She would sit on his knee and pry open his mouth to see where the strange sounds came from. And his cigaret delighted her.

II

IT WAS the Manila Kid himself who asked Miss Means and Miss Andrews if they would mind a bit of a boxing match in the social hall. They promptly withdrew to their cabin, after Miss Means had uttered a bewildered but dignified—"Not in the least! Don't think of us!"

Shortly after dinner the cabin stewards stretched a rope around four pillars, just forward of the dining-table. The men lighted cigarets and cigars, and moved up with quickening interest. Tex Connor, who had disappeared directly after the coffee, brought in his budding champion, a large grinning yellow man in a dingy bathrobe. The second mate, an English boy, and two of the engineers came in, and found seats about the improvised ring. Then an outer door opened, and the great mandarin entered bowing and smiling courteously with hands clasped before his breast. The fourteen or fifteen lesser mandarins followed, all rich color and rustling silk.

The young officers sprang to their feet and arranged chairs for the party. The great man sank into one; his attendants grouped themselves behind him.

Into this expectant atmosphere came the mate, in old gray knickerbockers and a sweater, stooping under the lintel of the door, then straightening up and stopping short.

His eye quickly took in the crowded little picture; the graybearded mandarin in the ringside chair, backed with a mass of Oriental color; that other personage, Dawley Kane, directly opposite, with the aquiline nose, the guardedly keen eyes and the quite humorless face, as truly a mandarin among the whites as was calm old T'ang among the yellow; the flushed

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eager face of Rocky Kane; the other whites, all smoking, all watching him sharply, all impatient for the show. He frowned; then, as the mandarin smiled, came gravely forward, bent under the rope and addressed him briefly in fluent Chinese.

The mandarin, frankly pleased at hearing his own tongue, rose to reply. Each clasped his own hands and bowed low, with the observance of long since hardened etiquette so dear to the Oriental heart.

"How about a little bet?" whispered Rocky Kane to Tex Connor. "I wouldn't mind taking the big fellow."

"What odds'll you give?" replied the impassive one.

"Odds nothing! Your man's a trained fighter, and he must be twenty years younger."

"But this man Doane's an old athlete. He's boxed, off and on, all his life. And he's kept in condition. Look at his weight, and his reach."

"What's the distance?"

"Oh—six two-minute rounds."

"Who'll referee?"

"Well—one of the Englishmen."

But the Englishmen were not at hand. A friendly bout between yellow and white overstepped their code. One of the customs men, an Australian, accepted the responsibility, however.

"I'll lay you a thousand, even," said Rocky Kane.

"Make it two thousand."

"I'll give you two thousand, even," said Dawley Kane, quietly.

"Taken! Three thousand, altogether—gold."

THE mate, turning away from the mandarin, caught this; stood motionless looking at them, his brows drawing together.

"Gentlemen," he finally remarked, "I came here with the understanding that it was to be only a little private exercise. I had no objections, of course, to your looking on, some of you, but this——"

"Oh come!" said Connor. "It's just for points. Tom's not going to fight you."

Young Kane, gripping the rope nervously with both hands, cried:

"You wouldn't quit!"

The mate looked down at these men.

"No," he replied, in the same gravely quiet manner, "I shall go on with it. I do this"—he made the point firmly, with a dignity that in some degree, for the moment, overawed the younger men—"I do it because his Excellency has paid us the honor of coming here in this democratic way. He tells me that he is fond of boxing. I shall try to entertain him." And he drew the sweater over his head, and caught the gloves that the Kid tossed him.

The elder Kane shrewdly took him in. The authority of the man was not to be questioned. Without so much as raising his voice he had quite dominated the strange little gathering. Physically he was a delight to the eye; anywhere in the forties, his hair thin to the verge of baldness, yet with shoulders, arms and chest that spoke of great muscular power, a waist without a trace of the added girth that middle age usually brings; of sound English stock, doubtless; the sort that in the older land would ride to hounds at eighty.

Dawley Kane looked, then, at the Chinese heavy-weight. This man, though not quite a match in size for the giant before him, appeared every inch the athlete. Kane understood the East too well to find him at all surprising; he had seen the strapping northern men of Yuan Shi K'ai's new army; he knew that the trained runners of the Imperial Government were expected, on occasion, to cover their hundred miles in a day; in a word, that the curious common American notion of the Chinese physique was based on an occasional glimpse of a tropical laundryman. And he settled back in his comfortable chair confident of a run for his money. The occasion promised, indeed, excellent entertainment.

"I've been out here a couple of times with the pater," he said, "You'll find the river interesting."

III

THE mate, still with that slight frown, glanced about. Not one of the crowded eager faces about the ropes exhibited the slightest interest in himself as a human being. He was but the mate of a river steamer; a man who had not kept up with his generation (the reason didn't matter), an individual of no standing. He put up his hands.

Tom Sung fell into a crouch. With his left shoulder advanced, his chin tucked away behind it, he moved in close and darted quick but hard blows to the stomach and heart. Doane stepped backward, and edged around him, feeling him out, studying his hands and arms, his balance, his footwork. It early became clear that he was a thorough-going professional, who meant to go in and make a fight of it. Doane, sparring lightly, considered this. Connor, had of course, no sportsmanship.

Tom's left hand shot up through his guard, landing clean on his face with a sharp thud; following up with a remarkably quick right swing that Doane, by sidestepping, succeeded only in turning into a glancing blow. And then, as Doane ducked a left thrust, he uppercut with all his strength. The blow landed on Doane's forearms with a force that shook him from head to foot.

A sound of breath sharply indrawn came from the spectators, to most of whom it must have appeared that the blow had gone home. Doane, slipping away and mopping the sweat from eyes and forehead, heard the sound; and for an instant saw them, all leaning forward, tense, eager

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for a knockout, the one possible final thrill.

The yellow man was at him again, landing left, right and left on his stomach and butting a shaven head with real force against his chin. For an instant stars danced about his eyes. Elbows had followed the head, roughing at his face.

Doane, quickly recovering, leaped back and dropped his hands.

"What is this?" he called sharply to Connor, whose round, expressionless face with its one cool, light eye and thin little mouth looked at him without response. "Head? Elbows? Is your man going to box, or not?"

The eyes that turned in surprise about the ringside were not friendly. These men cared nothing for his little difficulties; their blood was up. They wanted what the Americans among them would term "action" and "results."

Tom was tearing at him again. So it was, after all, to be a fight. No preliminary understandings mattered. He felt a profound disgust, as by main strength he stopped rush after rush, making full use of his greater reach to pin Tom's arms and hurl him back; a disgust, however, that was changing gradually to anger. He had known all his life the peculiar joy that comes to a man of great strength and activity in any thorough test of his physical power.

The customs man called time.

IV

ROCKY KANE—flushed, excited, looking like a boy—felt in his pockets for cigarets; found none; and slipped hurriedly out to the deck.

There a silken rustle stopped him short; and the soft pleasant tinkling of pearls in loops and strings.

A slim figure, enveloped in an embroidered gown, was moving back from a cabin window. The light from within fell—during a brief second—full on an oval face that was brightly painted, red and white, beneath glossy black hair that was built up on a frame with flowers and pearls. The nose was straight, and not wide. The eyes, slanted only a little, looked brightly out from under penciled brows.

She was moving swiftly toward the canvas screen; but he, more swiftly, leaped before her, stared at her; laughed softly in sheer delighted surprise. Then, with a quick glance about the deck, breathing out he knew not what terms of crude compliment, he reached for her; pursued her to the rail; caught her.

"You little beauty!" he was whispering now. "You wonder! You darling! You're just too good to be true." Beside himself, laughing again, he bent over to kiss her. But she wrenched an arm free, fought him off and leaned, breathless, against the rail.

"Little yellow tiger, eh?" he cried softly. "Well I'm a big white tiger!"

She said, in perfect English:

"This is amazing!"

He stood frozen there until she had disappeared behind the canvas screen.

Then he staggered back; stumbled against a deck chair; turning, found the strange thin girl of the middy blouse stretched out there comfortably in her rug.

She said, with a cool ease:

"It's so pleasant out here this evening, I really haven't felt like going in."

With a muttered something—he knew not what—he rushed off to his cabin; then back into the social hall.

V

THE customs man called time for the second round.

As Doane advanced to the center of the ring, Tom rushed, as before, head down. Doane uppercut him; then threw him back, forestalling a clinch. The next two or three rushes he met in the same determined but negative way; hitting a few blows but for the most part pushing him off. The sweat kept running into his eyes as he exerted nearly his full strength. And Tom Sung's shoulders and arms glistened a bright yellow under the electric lights.

Rocky Kane, lighting a cigaret and tossing the blazing match away, called loudly:

"Oh, hit him! For God's sake, do something! Don't be afraid of a chink!"

Doane glanced over at him. Tom rushed. Doane felt again the crash of solid body blows delivered with all the force of more than two hundred pounds of well-trained muscle behind them. Again he winced and retreated. He knew well that he could endure only a certain amount of this punishment. Suddenly Tom struck with the sharpest impact yet. Again that hard head butted his chin; and elbow and the heel of a glove roughed his face. Doane summoned all his strength to push him off. Then he stepped deliberately forward.

At last the primitive vigor in this giant was aroused. His eyes blazed. There was no manner of pleasure in hurting a fellow man of any color; but since the particular man was asking for it, insisting on it, there could be no longer a choice. The fellow had clearly been trained to this foul sort of work. That would be Connor's way, to take every advantage, place a large side bet and then make certain of winning. There was, of course, no more control of boxing out here on the coast than of gambling or other vice.

When Tom next came forward, Doane, paying not the slightest heed to his own defense, exchanged blows with him; planted a right swing that raised a welt on the yellow cheek. A moment later he landed another on the same spot.

At the sound of these blows the men about the ringside straightened up with electric excitement. Then again the long muscular right arm swung, and the tightly gloved fist crashed through Tom's guard with a force that knocked him nearly off his balance. Doane promptly brought him back with a left hook that sounded to the now nearly frantic spectators as if it must have broken the cheek bone.

Tom crouched, covered and backed away.

"Have you had enough?" Doane asked. As there was no reply, he repeated the question in Chinese.

Tom, instead of answering, tried another rush, floundering wildly, swinging his arms.

Doane stepped firmly forward, swinging up a terrific body blow that caught the big Chinaman at the pit of the stomach, lifted his feet clear off the floor and dropped him heavily in a sitting position, from which he rolled slowly over on his side.

"What are you trying to do?" cried the Manila Kid, above the babel of excited voices, as he rushed in and revived his fallen champion. "What are you trying to do—kill 'im?"

The mate stripped off his wet gloves and tossed them to the floor. "Teach your man to box fairly," he replied, "or somebody will." With which he stepped out of the ring, drew on his sweater and, with a courteous bow to the mandarin, stepped out on deck.

There, after depositing with the purser the winnings paid over by a surly Connor, Dawley Kane found him.

"Well!" cried the hitherto calm financier, "you put up a remarkable fight."

Doane looked down at him, unable to reply. He was still breathing hard; his thoughts were traveling strange paths. He heard the man saying other things; asking, at length, about the mandarin.

"He is T'ang Chi T'ung," Doane replied now, civilly enough, "Viceroy of Nanking."

"No! Really? Why, he was in America."

"He toured the world. He has been minister at Paris, Berlin, London, I believe. He is a great statesman—certainly the greatest out here since Li Hung Chang."

"No—how extremely interesting!"

"He is ruler of fifty million souls, or more."

The mate had found his voice. He was speaking a thought quickly, with a very little heat, as if eager to convince the great man of America of the standing and worth of this great man of China. "He has his own army and his own mint. He controls railroads, arsenals, mills and mines. Incidentally, he is president of this line."

"The China Merchants'? Really! You are acquainted with him yourself?"

"No. But he is a commanding figure hereabouts. And of course, I—at present I'm an employee of the Merchants' Line."

"Oh, yes! Yes, of course! You seem to speak Chinese."

"Yes"—the mate's voice was dry now—"I speak Chinese."

A SHUFFLING sound reached their ears. Both turned. The viceroy had come out of the cabin and was advancing toward them, followed by all his mandarins. Before them he paused, and again exchanged with the mate the charming Eastern greeting. In Chinese he said—and the language that needs only a resonant, cultured voice to exhibit its really great dignity and beauty, rolled like music from his tongue—

"It will give me great pleasure, sir, if you will be my guest to-morrow at twelve."

The mate replied, with a grave smile and a bow:

"It is a privilege; I am your servant."

They bowed again, with hands to breast. And all the mandarins bowed. Then they moved away in stately silence to their quarters aft.

Kane spoke now:

"How very curious! Very curious!"

Doane said nothing to this.

"They really appear to have charm, these upper-class people. It's a pity they are so poorly adapted to the modern struggle."

Doane looked down at him, then away. As a man acquainted with the East he knew the futility of discussing it with a Western mind; above all with the mind of a successful business man, to whom activity, drive, energy, were very religion.

His own thoughts were ranging swiftly back over two thousand years, to the strong

(*Continued on page 94*)

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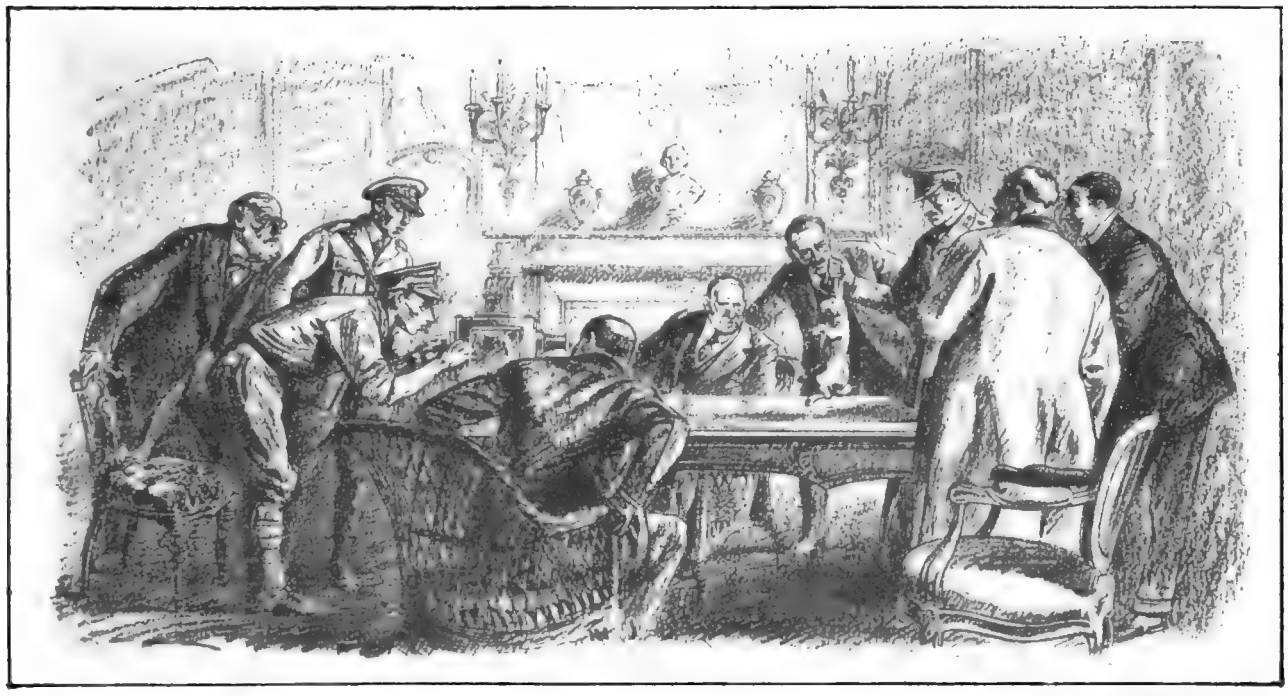

The rabbit died slowly.

The Spy Web

By Ferdinand Tuohy

IV—TALES OF "INTELLIGENCE"

This is the last article of a series that has unfolded a picture of the dramatic spy underground of the war. The three preceding told of the vast organization of this struggle for information in the great cities and at the front. The author, who was attached to the General Staff of the British Army, here tells some of the outstanding exploits, bizarre and heroic, of this dark play of brain against brain in the far-flung web of conflict during the war.

THE real, if not the titular, head of the British secret service in Egypt was Colonel Lawrence, a young man of twenty-nine, whose career of romantic adventure has been unexampled in this or probably in any other war. Lawrence, before the war, was a boyish, fair-haired young university student in England. Keen on archeology and Egyptology, his studies took him out to the Holy Land. And here he found himself in August, 1914. Lawrence first served as a subaltern in the political department, but gradually worked his way up by sheer knowledge of the native, and despite the concentrated obstruction of elderly experts alarmed at the possibility of their sinecure jobs slipping from them.

Lawrence finally became liaison officer with the King of Hejaz and chief British secret service agent. He would don the burnous and abbas, tan his features, wear a black wig cut in the Arab style and wander away into the desert, sometimes alone, sometimes at the head of a few Bedouin followers. His missions were manifold. Sometimes he would proceed behind the enemy's lines, have a good look around on his own, and then return and report laconically at General Headquarters. At other times, again, he would trot off on a camel toward Akaba, out in the wilderness, and there pay off Bedouin agents, collect their reports and instruct others to proceed on fresh missions behind the Turkish line.

On such treks he invariably lived the life of the complete Bedouin, even down to falling in with their religious ritual and eating their horrible food in their equally revolting Bedouin way. Lawrence stopped at nothing; he thought out all his own "stunts," and merely came and announced to Allenby, in the latter's little wooden hut overlooking the Mediterranean, just what he purposed doing next.

This fair-haired young man practically made the King of Hejaz; and having made him, he "used" him to the full.

One of Lawrence's pet hobbies was railway wrecking. The main Turkish railway from Damascus to Mekka ran down vertically about one hundred miles inland from the British right flank. Lawrence used to amuse himself by blowing it up now and then. He also blew up ammunition and troop trains and once captured a Turkish contingent of three officers and eighty men. He used to apologize on such occasions for not bringing in more prisoners, explaining that the fighting ardor of his Bedouin followers had been difficult to hold in check. Another highly useful mission Lawrence would fulfil was that of cutting the enemy's telegraphic communication. This used to be done just prior to important military operations in the field, the effect being that the Turks would be obliged to fall back on wireless.

Lawrence was given the Companionship of the Bath for his services. He was actually recommended for the Victoria Cross, but was not granted that supreme decoration because there had never been a senior officer witness of his exploits—a lame enough excuse, seeing that there was ample proof in a dozen ways that those exploits had well and truly been carried out. Another phase of his activities was what he called "Turk-baiting." This consisted in keeping the various Arab and Bedouin tribes on the flank of the Turkish armies in continuous revolt and insurrection against the Ottoman forces. Lawrence would go and live with a tribe for a few days, tell the headman what to do to harass the enemy, and then pass on to the next encampment of Bedouins and repeat the same process over again.

No less resourceful a spy out in Palestine was the German "Major Francks." Francks had spent nearly all his life in the British Colonies and would have passed for an Englishman in any society. He took full advantage of the fact by acquiring a collection of British officer uniforms and masquerading in them, as a British officer, behind the British lines. His career became legendary. Once when dressed as an Australian officer he was challenged by two Australian sentries. He promptly put them under arrest! On another occasion, masquerading as a colonel of the

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British Ordnance staff, and wearing the blue tabs and square gunmetal badge of that organization, he arrived at the main ammunition base at Rafa and, saying that he had been sent down by the Australian Division up in the line, made a full enquiry into the British ammunition supply.

Again, before a battle, he appeared in the British lines dressed as a staff captain with red tabs and, visiting the headquarters of a brigade of field artillery, announced that he had come from G. H. Q., and extracted full details of the barrage it was proposed to put down in the forthcoming action. Later, when the distinguished visitor had departed, it was found that wrong information had been given him on one point and the artillery staff rang up G. H. Q. with the correction. Headquarters knew nothing at all of any of their staff officers having been round the battery positions that day and so the masquerader became known. At great pressure of work, the whole barrage had to be altered from that given inadvertently to Francks.

The latter's final exploit was perhaps the most amazing of all. While the British were holding the Jaffa-Jerusalem sector he came round, again as a staff officer, and passed from battalion to battalion in the line as an inspecting officer. He questioned each battalion commander minutely on his instructions for the forthcoming British attack and then returned unsuspected to the Turkish lines.

Naturally the exploits of Francks led to quite a Francks scare in Palestine. Many perfectly innocent officers were detained as suspects and staff work much hampered in consequence. Yet despite the real danger this man presented and the hundreds of casualties he must have caused the British, a general hope prevailed that so brave a sportsman would never be caught, since, if he had been, his masquerade in British uniform would have left the British with no option but to shoot him.

The Story of Wassmuss

PERHAPS the most successful and the most typical spy east of Suez was a young German.

Once a fortnight the Intelligence Branch of our General Staff used to issue a map showing the distribution of the enemy's forces in eastern theatres of war. Across one whole corner of this map appeared, printed in red ink, the word "Wassmuss." The area covered by this one word equaled several times that of England. The whole of this country, southern Persia, was under the influence of the young German consul Wassmuss—that was what the writing on the map meant.

Wassmuss stood for all that is skilful, cunning, thorough and dangerous in the German system of Eastern penetration. Before the war, though only a young man in the early twenties, his consulate at Bushire was the most imposing of all the local European establishments. His frequent receptions to the local dignitaries and headmen of the surrounding tribes were designed to impress—and duly did so. In November, 1914, we tried to capture this young gentleman, but, like the *Goeben*, he escaped, and a human *Goeben* he was destined to remain throughout the war, a constant menace, a political force to be reckoned with, and one which served to immobilize thousands of British troops.

Knowing Persian like a native, conversant with every detail of Persian habits and customs, Wassmuss retired to the hinterland, taking with him large sums of German gold. There his self-set mission was to act as a spy for Germany, to hold southern Persia under German influence, and to make things thoroughly disagreeable for the British, and in all three spheres he achieved a fabulous one-man success. First one tribe and then another attacked us. As a result, British reinforcements had to be sent to Persia at a time when every man was urgently needed elsewhere.

Wassmuss had his spies and agents throughout Persia, and, except for three companions and a Swiss, he employed only Persians. Some of these men belonged to the chief families in the land; others were mere fisherfolk by the Gulf. Throughout the war Wassmuss maintained constant communication with Berlin through Liman von Sanders.

THE state of military preparations in India, the disposition of our forces in Mesopotamia, and the dispatch of troops to other theatres of war—all became known to him, and the information was duly forwarded. Owners of the large sailing boats plying between India and Persia brought him information. Fishermen saw troopships passing, noted the size, and Wassmuss calculated the numbers on board. Goods consigned to Persia from India indicated the description and strength of troops proceeding to France and Egypt—thus the dispatch of a case of soap indicated that a brigade of Indian infantry was leaving for the west. And so on. Any unusual preparations among the British troops in Persia were at once reported to Wassmuss by servants (agents of his) employed about the British encampments and in the officers' messes.

While he was thus organizing active resistance to the British and impeding their military arrangements, his three companions were touring Persia and getting into touch with and counter-bribing spies in the pay of England.

The whole story of the work of these German spies and agents in Persia is an outstanding example of what clever and determined men can do when actuated by devotion to their country. Long after his companions had been captured Wassmuss continued to be a thorn in the side of the British. The constant threat of attack on Bushire by tribesmen of which he was the virtual chief immobilized thousands of British troops in the Gulf; four warships were constantly employed in endeavoring to intercept dhows bringing him ammunition from across the sea.

Wassmuss invented his own war news for Persian consumption, and when we attacked on the Somme in 1916 he counterblasted by pinning up at his home at Ahram exclusive information that the Germans had landed in England and killed King George! And the news spread throughout the land.

At this period the British authorities offered fifty thousand pounds to any one handing the amazing man over. Yet, in spite of the fact that he was then the only white man among all these wild tribesmen, that his stocks of money were running out, and that he was a Christian and an infidel, he was never given up. Why? As these Easterners afterward explained because the sum offered was ridiculous; no man was worth so much, and therefore the offer could not be serious!

As soon as Wassmuss ran out of funds he began issuing paper promises to pay; toward the end he actually persuaded his Persians to pay him a monthly salary of three hundred rupees. They also fed and clothed him, and gave him a horse. Wassmuss stopped at nothing. He not only endured great hardships by constant association with the most uncleanly people in the East, but also proceeded, *pro patria*, to marry a Persian girl, the daughter of one of the headmen among whom he lived.

The Crucial Password

A CRITICAL stage had been reached in certain operations in Picardy. We were being held up and decimated and it became imperative that the next main attack should succeed at all events in one specific sector. If this sector gave, the whole would give. For such an assault to succeed, exact gunnery was of vital importance. The guns must be trained minutely on every German battery, trench mortar and machine-gun emplacement, on gas cylinders, on ammunition and food dumps, on mine shafts, on assembly points for the troops, on headquarters, on cross-roads, on telephone and telegraph exchanges—the nervous system, the heart, the brain, the jugular vein of the German had to be aimed at—no use just kicking one's opponent on a tender but unimportant part of the body.

The staff of the British division earmarked for the vital attack made a minute study of all these features and elements in the line opposite. They studied air photographs of the German trenches, and from shadows upon them, and from "worm tracks," etc., got to know which were telephone exchanges and which were batteries or dumps; they ordered the infantry to capture German prisoners and then proceeded to put these captives through an exhaustive examination, as to their life in the line, when they expected to be relieved, their company strength, defensive organization, etc., and the customary map and summaries of information were duly compiled and circulated to the fighting units.

It was then that a young officer suggested going across and verifying certain information on the spot—some of it, he contended, must needs be inaccurate, and so much depended on the attack. The divisional general agreed to the proposed enterprise, when its nature and chances were explained, and for the next few days the ardent spirit who had suggested it sat surrounded by maps and summaries of information, and files of prisoners' statements and air photographs, absorbing all and every form of information appertaining to the particular sector he was to penetrate and spy upon. Toward the end of his scrutiny he knew the German line opposite, and the mode of life of its occupants, almost as intimately as he knew his own surroundings. All was ready. His German was flawless and he thought out replies beforehand to meet every possible situation. The uniform of a captured German officer was altered

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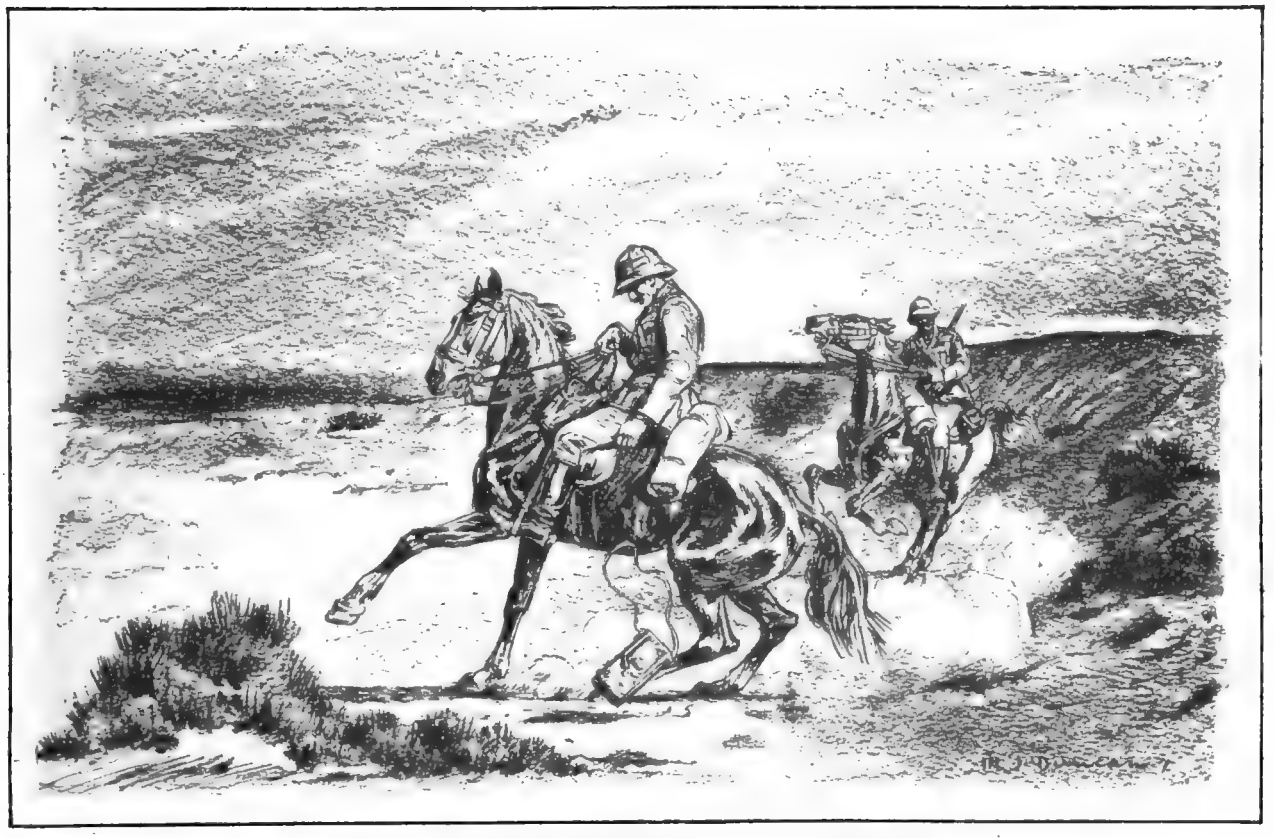

The couple had apparently ridden right on to a Turkish outpost.

to fit him and a badge and regiment very carefully chosen. The selected badge and number were those of a regiment of German artillery known to be directly opposite—the young British officer was to masquerade, if challenged, as an officer of that unit.

Everything was *au point*—except the confounded password that would have to be given to the first German outpost or sentry and to many another en route. German prisoners previously captured from this particular sector were sent for and reexamined on the point. All they could say was that the last day they had been in line the password had been "Gerda," but that it was systematically changed every twenty-four hours. It was now "W" day. Two more days, "Y" and "Z" lay ahead before the attack.

THE password impasse was final and insoluble; there seemed nothing for it but to abandon the whole enterprise. This decision had actually been come to when, in the normal routine of field intelligence work, the listening-set reports for "W" day were handed in at division headquarters. The listening-set report for that particular day and that particular area contained a sentence overheard in which the name "Hauptmann Schmidt" occurred. Some German officer in the sector opposite was named "Schmidt." In a flash the would-be spy saw his opportunity.

He asked and obtained permission to embark on his perilous mission that very night and toward the small hours left the British lines and picked his way across "no man's land," alone and without a guide, and dressed as a German officer with the collar of his great coat well up to shield him from the elements and incidentally to conceal his features. He took with him, in his pocket, a German post-card he had taken off a recent prisoner. In a few minutes he had reached the German wire, had picked a way through it and was lowering himself down into the German front-line trench.

"*Wer da!*" challenged a sleepy voice.

The young Englishman confronted the German sentry, then rasped out in guttural Prussian, almost before the "*da*" of "*wer da*" had died away: "*Ich suche den Hauptmann Schmidt*" (I'm looking for Captain Smith). The sentry drew himself to attention, noting the rank and artillery badge of his interlocutor.

"He is down at battalion headquarters, Herr Lieutenant."

"Good."

Then casually handing the sentry the post-card he had taken off the recent prisoner: "Here's a post-card for some one in your battalion. It came to me by mistake. Good night—by the way" (and here the young Englishman turned sharply and severely on the now thoroughly cowed and duped sentry), "what's the password?"

The sentry, completely on the defensive, blurted it out, "*Schnapps!*" Continuing on his way, he was regularly challenged "*Wer da?*" Then "*Schnapps*" would respond the spy. And so it continued up trenches, down duckboards, at dumps and heaps of mine spoil, at battery positions and headquarters—all over the area, until his time grew short and back he wandered to the British lines, still saying "*Schnapps*" when challenged and still noting all he saw and passed.

The East Coast Scheme

IN THE autumn of 1916, the startling information came by very "hush-hush" channels through to G. H. Q. at Montreuil that a certain sapper "S" of the Canadian Corps had perfected an apparatus by which photographs could be taken by wireless. Accompanying the announcement was a negative or plate which, when held up to the light, showed a Zeppelin flying by night over the British lines. "S" was at once sent for and told to carry on his experiment—under observation. A man of forty, and, as afterward turned out, of strangely perfected ability, he brought up with him from Etaples a magic lantern apparatus which he would allow no one to touch—much less examine. After some study, and having produced several more wireless photographs by night—the secret of which he refused yet to part with—"S" still further gripped the attention of the Olympians on Montreuil by announcing his instrument, or an amplification of it, could take photographs on X-ray lines of the entire human body—not merely show up bones, etc., as hitherto, but lay bare on his negative the heart and lungs and other organs through and through.

HE WAS taken round to various hospitals and there, with his apparatus, duly took the type of wireless X-ray photograph he claimed to be able to do. The only thing that seemed odd was that many of the plates were "duds"—i. e., showed nothing at all. Only one in half a dozen plates actually succeeded. Still "S" explained this away as being due to the imperfect development of his invention, and he was readily believed and given every further facility as asked for. The pundits were now thoroughly alive to the possibility of "S's" inventive genius being turned to the most deadly account against the enemy—indeed they even foresaw the likelihood of an invention of so formidable a nature being introduced into the offensive organization of the British army that

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the human trench line opposing it should shrivel up in a night—and, one might say, at the pressing of a button. In point of fact, experiments were rapidly approaching a state in which wireless rays might be projected with such strength as to kill human beings. No new idea, but hitherto impracticable. Yet here was "S" steadily making good his every claim.

HIS experiments were now surrounded by an attenuated form of secrecy. He was put in a secluded château near St. Pol, standing well back from the road. A guard was mounted around the villa and none save authorized officers, and there were very few such, were permitted ingress. Finally, in order completely to deflect the attention of the vulgar herd, "S" and his experiments were officially referred to in correspondence and verbally as "The East Coast Scheme." October, November passed so in magic-lantern experiments, the work seeming to reduce "S" to a state of extreme physical and nervous exhaustion.

Then one wonderful morning the longed-for event was reported to General Headquarters. "S" had killed a living thing by the projection of wireless rays. He had killed a rabbit. The officer attached to "S" for observation purpose had seen the thing done. There could be no conceivable doubt about it. Matters now assumed a transcendant interest—an officer was especially sent across to England to beat up a covey of famous scientists and bring them across post-haste to the silent secret château of St. Pol. The greatest brains were needed to develop the invention against time from the rabbit-killing to the man-killing stage. And then presto! adieu for Fritz.

Under all these new and critical eyes "S" preserved the same uncommunicative unsociable attitude as heretofore. He "didn't want these guys chipping in on my stunt and then saying they'd done it themselves." Sympathy. Much sympathy. The great, silent inventor was permitted his sullenness and self-isolation. Such a brain, at such a time, in such circumstance, must not be bothered by petty worries. All must be concentrated on the big thing.

"S" got paler and paler. So engrossed, so hopelessly enslaved was he by his work, that he would even take his apparatus up to bed with him "So that none of them guys should tamper with it." The "guys" meanwhile were getting skeptical. Then one morning "S" would kill another chicken or rabbit and even the most unbelieving would experience a fresh jolt of faith. The news of the kill would be telephoned to the highest château in the land. Sometimes the inmates of the highest château did not wait for such information. A very distinguished officer would motor up in a very distinguished Rolls-Royce and, brushing Napoleon-like past the sentries, would invade the holy-of-holies and in that abrupt dynamic way of his demand the very latest news. Meanwhile "S" was gazetted a temporary captain.

Still, winter was drawing on and was not agreeing with the gout of the distinguished scientists. Besides, what were they doing there anyway? "S" wouldn't let them as much as finger his magic lantern. Once again doubts, fears arose. "S" certainly achieved most important results—but how? He must be made to share his knowledge with others. Or better still, let him be separated from his magic lantern for some hours and by some subterfuge, so that an alien hand might seek to operate it.

WITH much persuasion, "S" was ultimately separated for a morning from his apparatus and while he was away it was set in motion and directed on a rabbit. The rabbit died slowly. The news was breathlessly telephoned to G. H. Q. by the officer in charge of "S." "Have killed my first rabbit," he said, then banged down the receiver. Hopes rose again mountain high—the distinguished scientists crowded round. Then some one suggested cutting the rabbit open and having a look at him. This was done. The rabbit had been poisoned.

When "S" came back that afternoon

(*Continued on page 99*)

"What's the password?"

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Sammy, Old Fox

By Arthur Crabb

THE day had the spring's first smile in it, one of those sweet, warm, female smiles that a wise man like me, Sam Hicks, knows means only that more cold winds are coming before the gladioli, etceteras, harbinge real warm, regular-green golf weather. Well, anyway, it was an early spring day—round five P.M., when I would have rolled down my roll-top if I hadn't earned the family living over a flat-topped table, and started home. On the street I met Betty carrying a dress-suit case. I took the dress-suit case, which seemed to please Betty, though it was light as a feather. I had hooked the family automobile off Ma Hicks for the day.

"Want to ride home?" asked I, and Betty said she'd like nothing better; so we did, and I deposited her at her front gate, a few houses down the street from ours, but not until I had noticed a few things.

Betty looked tired, and when I asked her about it, she confessed that she *was* tired, dead tired. Betty had a job in a bank, and Betty in a bank seemed just as unnatural as S. Hicks would be selling lingerie in a French shop. Betty wasn't the business-woman type of girl; she was good at her job, I was told, but it was an awful waste of good material making her play jackstraws with checks and bills and accounts and that sort of thing.

She was a good-looking young woman, steady as a rock, and sweet as honey, as good, substantial and pleasant a girl as you could ask for. Personally I fancied her a lot; I liked to look at her and I liked the way she did things. I liked especially the way she played family auction.

She was the sort of girl who should have been out-of-doors a lot, had her main existence in her own home, with a baby's head on her bosom, which was made for baby's heads, and had a good reliable man about the house. But instead of that, she was working all sorts of hours in the bank, and she did it largely because she had to; anyway that was my guess, for there certainly wasn't much money in Betty's house.

I suppose I'm queer as the devil, but I was a whole lot sorrier for Betty than I ever could be for a woman who had gone down till she landed in the gutter, or a widow with eight children and no cash. I suppose I ought not to feel that way, but as I look at it women have got to go wrong and there must be poor widows and other tough-luck stories to make up this perverse old world of ours; but why the Lord, Nature, Providence, and past generations should fashion a glorious, lovely, creature like Betty and then make her unhappy, and make her work in a bank, I don't know. There'd be just about as much sense in hitching a thrush to a plow and expecting results.

Sam Hicks, you know, has hunches. Arthur Crabb has told you about some of them before. Sometimes they worked. This is the story of one that was too good. It worked much better than Sam expected. And you'll be as glad as Sam Hicks that it did.

But Betty's father was nearly an invalid, Betty's mother was a charming elderly woman, there wasn't any too much money and so Betty went to work. That afternoon driving home, Betty was pale, her cheeks were a little thin; her eyelids drooped a little, and there was a pathetic little quiver on her lips; but her smile, when she did smile, was as sweet as ever a smile could be, and her courage was strong. She didn't complain; she just said she was dead tired, and I saw a lot of things in her eyes that I didn't talk about, but I had a hunch I knew what they meant.

I SPOKE to Mrs. Hicks about Betty when I got home—Molly was very fond of her.

"It's a doggone shame!" I said. "How on earth does a girl like her get to be as old as she is without getting married?" Betty must have been close to thirty.

Ma Hicks shrugged her figurative shoulders—I can not recall ever having seen her shrug her physical shoulders. "It happens that way, sometimes," she said.

"When you see all sorts of frivolous, silly, vapid, brainless creatures get husbands early in life while a girl like Betty doesn't get any at all and has to work in a bank, I'm ashamed of my fellow men," said I.

"Probably she has never known a man she liked enough to marry," said Mrs. Hicks, which wasn't exactly what she meant, as will be shown later. "She'll get married before long."

"Maybe—I haven't seen any men playing round with her, but perhaps she's got a beau or two under cover. The dickens of it is she hasn't got time for men; she works all day, and she told me herself that she goes to bed right after dinner whenever she can."

"Fiddlesticks," exclaimed Molly. "She sees plenty of men; she goes out a lot. She's away almost every Sunday, and besides, she sees men in town."

"A bank's a fine place to start a romance," I said, sarcastic like, and then Molly 'fessed up, about Betty never having liked a man well enough to marry him.

"She'd marry Doctor Scott, if he asked her," she said.

"Then why, in Heaven's name, doesn't he ask her?" I cried, and Molly shrugged her figurative shoulders again.

"He's too lazy, I suppose," she said. "He's leaving well enough alone."

"Well enough be hanged!" I exclaimed, and then I added, "I don't suppose he can be blamed for not getting married if he doesn't want to."

"No, naturally," said Molly, "though I think all doctors, family doctors especially, ought to be married. I think the trouble is that he takes Betty for granted; they've known each other all their lives—I really believe that he expects to marry her some day; but he's too busy, he's perfectly comfortable, those two aunts of his take good care of him and—well—he just hasn't got round to it."

I'd known Betty and Doctor Scott for nigh onto a dozen years and never once had it entered my head that either one ever gave the other a matrimonial thought, but Molly is unusually wise and has a keen eye for matters of that sort, and now that she mentioned it I realized that she was probably right, which same didn't add to my happiness. If Betty was eating her heart out for the Doctor, it was an everlasting shame—and I felt about forty times sorrier for her than I had before, and that's some sorry.

The Doctor was a good fellow, a good doctor, a good sport and all right generally. Betty couldn't do better; it would be fine for every one concerned, but Betty was working in a bank, she was dead tired, she was pale, just because he was too busy to—to marry her! That's what Molly said, wasn't it?

I saw the Doctor the next day and the inclination to walk up to him and say a pointed word or two was extremely strong, but not quite strong enough. I waved to him instead as he went by, but I think that 'twas then that the seed was planted that grew into the fox bush on which old Sam Hicks was the only and unusually beautiful flower.

CIRCUMSTANCES were all in favor of the seed. Mrs. Hope Child, wife unto Molly's brother Harold, and Harold himself, were all for some kind of a junket to the semi-South for a month, and came round and tried to talk the Hickses, popper and mommer, into going along. They could have talked to me forever without altering the fact that *I simply could not go*, and I didn't, but Ma Hicks did. If I got the printer to stick in asterisks to denote the omission of the reasons why Ma Hicks thought she couldn't go, and the reasons why I insisted she should, the next 'steen pages hereafter following would look like a negative of the Milky Way on a pleasant August night. Masculine superiority of intellect, logic, determination, h'm—and—er my generally all round good sense, won, and the missus went. That's Circumstance Number One. Circumstance Number Two was that during the afternoon of the day on the morning of which Molly had departed, my office door opened slightly and a well-remembered head poked itself in.

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"All right to come in the rest of the way?" asked the head. It belonged to one William McAllister, younger brother of a classmate of mine in college, a likely youth, good to look at, good as to major points of character, and extremely pleasant in all ways.

"Betcha," said I, and in came Bill, and we began to talk, bringing the history of our lives up to date. It developed that Bill, who was a lawyer and lived in a distant city, had a case in the United States Court and would be about town for quite a while. "How long?" asked I.

"Month, maybe," said Bill.

"Allah be praised," said I. "Get your trunk and come spend it with me."

Like Molly, Bill had another Milky Way of reasons why he couldn't, but I was not Sam Hicks for nothing, and in the end his arguments availed nothing against mine.

"Sure; tickled to death," he admitted finally, "but I can't graft a month's b. & l. off you."

"Try it and see if you can't," I said; "it's lonely as hell out there alone—I'll pay you to come—what do companions charge?"

Bill got his trunk and we boarded the five-thirteen train for Lanley, whereupon Circumstance Number Three arose and bowed. I discovered Mrs. Norman Dean, the most beautiful and charming of ladies, on the train, and before I realized what had happened we were chatting together.

"Did Molly get off all right?" she asked.

I suggested that as I, Sam Hicks, had made the arrangements and supervised her departure she had of course got off all right.

"Norman's gone off, too," said Madam Peggy, "on some old business. He won't be home till Friday." The day was Wednesday; Thursday lay between, and old Sam Hicks had one of those wonderful inspirations of his.

"What you say we have a little party to-morrow night," I remarked, "to meet Bill? I'll give it, you chaperon it, and I'll find a lady to make a fourth for bridge and to meet Bill."

Peggy suggested something about going to her house, but I objected; I'd spoken first.

"All right," said Peggy. "I can stand it if you can."

"How about the girl—to meet Bill?" I asked. Peggy thought a minute and was, I am sure, going to leave it to me anyway, when I said, "How about Betty? I like playing bridge with Betty."

"Just the one," said Peggy; "she's a dear."

So it was settled, and after dinner I took Bill round and let Betty look at him; then I invited her to dinner the next night, and she decided that if Peggy Dean could stand it she could.

THUS it came about that we had our party, which had a tang to it, a bit of deviltry mixed up in it, even if Peggy and Betty did insist on putting the kids to bed. I have said before that I liked playing bridge with Betty; she not only played well, but she played as though she liked it, as though she were out to win, and not as so many ladies play, as though it were a conventional and rather tiresome way of passing an evening, as though the winning or losing of a finesse were a matter of complete indifference, and as though to show a trace of interest in the proceedings were rather vulgar.

Furthermore Betty looked well, exceedingly well, that night. She had on a gray dress that knew its business, her hair was a crown of glory for fair and she had a passionate-colored, silk scarf over her shoulders that was a honey. The evening was, if I, the host, do say it, a success—and somewhere in the middle of it came another one of those inspirations of mine, only this time I outdid myself.

It was the acme of inspirations, the kind that comes only once or twice in a lifetime, and then only to men of genius; it was a humdinger of an inspiration. I saw Betty, beautiful, charming and good as Peggy Dean; I saw Betty, a woman comparing favorably with my own wandering spouse, and I saw Bill, the irrepressible youth, and the inspiration came, just as natural as song comes to a song bird; it just couldn't help coming; it was so simple it was impossible that it should not come—that inspiration, to me, Sam Hicks, the fox.

PEGGY, being a plute, went home in her limousine. Bill walked with Betty to her door, a hundred yards or so away.

"Nice girl," I said, when he came back.

"Very," said Bill, filling his pipe and thinking of the tobacco.

"She's more than that—she's a damn nice girl," I said.

"Well," said Bill, "you needn't get mad about it. Who said she wasn't?"

"If you had any sense you'd see that she is an unusually fine girl, a really very superior girl, in fact such a girl as you seldom run across."

"All right, all right," said Bill. "Let's go to bed."

"Wait a minute; I want to talk to you."

"About that superior girl?" asked Bill sadly.

"Exactly. I want you to rush her—for a month." Bill looked at me as though I were crazy. "Yes, I mean it. I want you to give her the time of her life. I'll do my part: I'll pay for the violets and candy, I'll go buy them for you so you won't have to bother with them at all, I'll put the car at your disposal, and I promise you, I give you my solemn word of honor, that no harm will come of it to either of you; when the month is up you go off scot free. She—well, she'll be happy—and grateful to you. You'll have done a wonderful act of charity. You've simply got to do it."

"Come on, Sam, come on, come to bed. I'd do most anything for you—when you're sober—even rush your Betty girl, but——"

"Am I not sober?" I demanded.

"I don't know where you got it, but you are not!"

"She's a nice girl, isn't she?" I asked.

"Certainly she's a nice girl, but you wouldn't call her exactly exciting, would you?" he said. "Now if you wanted me to rush Mrs. Dean I'd be delighted to accommodate you."

"Oh, very well," I said, "if you won't do it for me, maybe you'll do it for her, for humanity, for the sake of justice, for charity. Here's the situation." I explained about Betty and the Doctor. "You see," I went on, "she's waiting for him; he's drifting along, waiting for business to be rotten so he'll have time to arrange things and marry her; he takes her for granted. She loves him and has, as a result, sent away all the up and doing lads that were eager and willing to take her on the spot. The Doctor will come to it eventually, but in the meantime she's eating her heart out, working herself to death in a bank, and wasting the best years of her life. What's needed is competition; get the Doctor to thinking that some fellow with gumption is after her and he'll walk up and—all will be well."

Bill laughed. "You're some sly old fox, ain't you, Sammy?" he murmured.

"Am I right or am I not?"

"If the facts are as you state them, I'm inclined to think that maybe you're right."

"And you'll do your duty?" I cried joyously.

"Well, I'll do what I can, for you—and the damsel in distress—but, Sam, don't forget that not by the wildest stretch of the imagination could you call her exciting."

The next morning while Bill was in his bath, I filched from his pocket a sheaf of his cards, and on my way to the office I dropped in on my friend Pennell and ordered a bunch of violets sent to Betty on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, until further notice, and I left a dozen of Bill's cards to go with them, one by one.

Three bunches a week four weeks, two dollars per bunch, twenty-four dollars. "A mere trifle," says I, "considering the heart of Betty and the sweetness of her," and I went on my way.

That being Friday, the violets were waiting for Betty when she reached home, and when Bill and I, smoking our after-dinner pipes, strolled her way, Betty had 'em on in front, the combination being all right. She thanked Bill for them and Bill never batted an eyelash. I hoped the Doctor would go by, but he didn't, so I thought maybe I'd better arrange to take Bill and Betty where the Doctor was, so I invited them to dine with me at the Lanning Club the next night. They accepted, and knowing the Doctor's habits as well as his character, I had a hunch that I could get him to eat with us.

THE next day, Saturday, was a peach, so far as my Micky-vellian scheme was concerned. I sat alone in the back seat of the family chariot while Bill and Betty sat in the front, and the Doc saw them on the road.

I got Bill a guest-card at the Lanning Club; I sent Betty five pounds of the finest chocolates at two dollars per pound—ten dollars, which plus twenty-four dollars amounts to thirty-four dollars, still a mere nothing—and I enclosed Bill's card. I got the Doctor for dinner and noticed that he was trying to diagnose Bill, the violets still going strong on Betty's bosom, and last but not least, I got in a quiet word with Betty.

"Don't let that boy deceive you," I said. "He's an irresponsible, headstrong lad, and a devil with the ladies; he gets awful crushes on pretty girls, they last about a month and then he—but you understand, don't take him seriously. He's a nice boy—let him amuse you while he listeth."

One dinner for four, sixteen dollars, and thirty-four dollars, previously noted, amounted to fifty dollars, which was negligible.

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While Bill was in the bath, I filched from his pocket a sheaf of his cards.

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When the party was over I gave Bill a hint. "Get her away in my car; I'll go home with the Doctor."

It was a grand evening; the Doctor was getting nervous already. He was specially nervous when Bill drove up to Betty's door an hour later than any reasonable schedule permitted, and then sat in the car with Betty for quite a while before she got out and went indoors. We saw that, he and I, from his doorstep.

Of course the Doctor knew where the violets came from, that is, he knew they came from Bill. I, thinking of the Doctor, amused myself by writing a prescription in my mind's eye, sort of jumbled like—

Violets one bunch—for external use only—apply low on chest. Skull and cross-bones in red—Do not take internally. Aroma bad for the heart—when wafted to foreign nostrils is good for those afflicted with hookworm, stiffens the back-bone, stimulates ambition.

"You did fine, Bill," I said when we were reunited within the Hicks mansion. "I'm much obliged."

"You sure are a wise old fox, Sam," he said, "the Doc began to take notice right away. The Doc's all right, too."

"You don't suppose I'd be fixing things for Betty if he wasn't, do you?"

"No, I suppose not, but I hope the Doc gets busy quick. Betty's a nice girl, Sam, an awfully nice girl, and I'm only too glad to do anything I can for her and for you, but you know she's—well, Sam—she's not what you call exciting."

"Who wants a frivolous, exciting woman in the house?" I demanded. "Not a doctor, of all men."

"Who said anything about a woman for keeps? I'm talking about a rushee, from the point of view of the rusher."

Come Sabbath eve we saw the Doctor drop in on Betty, in an off-hand sort of way, casual like, and sit on the piazza. 'Twas a lovely eve.

Bill winked at me. "It's working," he said.

"Why wouldn't it? What would you expect?"

"Com'on," he said; "Let's go over—you talk to the Doc and I'll talk to Betty—while we're doing it we might as well do it right; the quicker it's over the better.

SO WE strolled over and I chatted with the Doctor while Bill and Betty whispered in the dusk. Later on a voice came out of the said dusk—"Sam, can I have your car to-morrow night?"

"Sure," I said, and I heard Bill say to Betty that he knew it would be all right, and that it was lots pleasanter than going in the train.

On the way home he said, "Get a couple of seats for a show to-morrow night, will you, Sam?"

"For you and Betty?"

"Certainly—who else? Want to come along?"

"No, thanks."

"How far can I go on supper afterward?" he asked. "I don't want to break you—even for Betty's sake."

"Anything reasonable," I said. "If the Doctor knows about it you can go as far as you like."

"Don't worry, he knows about it all right already. He heard us discussing it—I could even see that he wanted to make it a party of four and didn't have the nerve to suggest it."

"How could he hear when I didn't?" I asked.

"For two reasons—he was nearer than you were, and he was listening."

Fifty dollars plus two theatre tickets at two dollars each, four dollars, plus supper at ten dollars, approximately, equals sixty-four dollars total. Chicken feed, a trifle, to get Betty out of the bank!

I didn't sit up for Bill Monday night. At breakfast the next morning he spoke about the second batch of violets.

"Don't overdo it," he said. "Moderation in all things. And incidentally, with all modesty, you're sure the game's safe? I don't want to get in Dutch—women do queer things sometimes; you never can tell what they're going to do."

"You leave that to me—I know Betty."

"Oh, very well, Foxy, old top. Can I stay home to-night?"

"Maybe; we'll see."

As a matter of fact we had a small and early game of auction, suggested by a temporary widow lady who lived on our street, without more than a hint from me over the telephone, and oh, you luck! Just as Bill was leading Betty away from her door-step en route to the auction, who should go by but the Doctor. He was starting to slow down, but when he saw what he saw he resumed speed and went on.

I GOT in a sentence or two edgewise with Betty before the evening was over.

"What did I tell you about the boy?" I said. "Don't let him break your heart. It's a way he has."

"It's nearly broken already," Betty said with a grin. "He's a perfect dear—I love him."

That made it all right—if she had loved him she would have said, "Why, yes, he's very nice but I'm not crazy about him."

****

That line of Milky Way represents a week and a few days, at the end of which time Bill was beginning to get a bit restless, to chafe under the load and to show signs of rebellion.

"Betty's a nice girl, Sam," he said, "an awfully nice girl and good to her mother and all that sort of thing, but—"

"But what?"

"I told you in the beginning that she wasn't exactly exciting, and I'm—I'm getting just a little bored. Besides, living up to five bunches of violets, a hundredweight of chocolates and bonbons, three lunch parties and a lot of other things, is no easy job when your heart isn't in it. And besides, Sam, I—I—I don't want to be egotistical, but last night I sort of thought that I saw signs of—hang it all! Sam, I can't go on—somebody's going to get hurt; she doesn't understand."

"Rubbish, she understands perfectly—so far as you are concerned, she—"

"You haven't told, have you?"

"I've told her nothing. I don't have to; she has plenty of common sense. Have you noticed the Doctor lately? He's going round like a chicken with its head off."

"He's going round like a ghost out in the cold with no clothes on, looking for a warm spot. If you're such a wise old owl, why in Heaven's name don't you get him to go down on his knees before Betty and settle things so that I can have a vacation? So far as I can see you've turned me into Sindbad the Sailor with other people's troubles hanging on my neck; you've turned the Doc's goat loose to wander all over the premises—and God knows what you've done to Betty. I'm a sport, Sam, but I'll be damned if I like taking chances with a decent girl like her. She's a perfect child, in some ways, and I'm through."

Bill frightened me a bit; he was no fool was Bill, and he *was* an attractive lad and modest, too; if he thought Betty was getting a little soft on him there might be something in it. If there was something in it I'd have to give up being a fox. I was pretty sure there wasn't—I knew Betty too well, and we, I, had sure stirred up the Doctor. So I had a talk with Betty.

"He's the craziest boy I ever knew," she laughed, "and believe me, Sam, it's lucky I'm not a giddy, impressionable creature, or I surely would get my heart broken. He *is* nice, but I can't help laughing at him—he just deluges me with flowers and things, and all the while he's terribly afraid I'll take it all seriously. I should think he'd be in hot water with girls all the time."

"It's his one and only weakness," I said, and then I had another inspiration. "Why don't you give him a scare?—it might do him good." I thought afterward that perhaps that was a tactical blunder.

Betty laughed, and there was a twinkle in her eye. "If he was a man like you maybe I would," she said, "but he's just a big boy. I don't want to make him unhappy. He's been very nice to me, really, and given me lots of good times, and I feel sure he knows I'm a perfectly safe old lady. Besides, he's going away before long and I'd rather have him go away happy and liking me than unhappy and hating me. Women are lots wiser than men, some ways, sometimes."

Betty was having the time of her life with meddlesome old Sam Hicks, which was perfectly satisfactory to Sam. I'd found out what I wanted to know.

"Don't quit," I said to Bill a while later. "Everything's going fine—I'll be responsible for Betty, so far as you are concerned. All you've got to do is to make the going rough for the Doctor—I'll pay the bills and guarantee the results. The Doc will probably ask you to be best man."

Bill sighed. "Oh, very well, Foxy Grandpa, I suppose I've got to earn my board, but for the love o' Mike put some pep in the Doc."

"The Doc's coming along fine," I said. "I saw him looking at Betty t'other night in a way that encouraged me mightily—I'll bet you that within a week—"

"You know the Doc's a pretty decent boy," Bill interrupted.

"Of course he is; he's the salt of the earth—just the man for Betty."

"I wish he'd get a wiggle on him," said Bill sadly.

****

ONE week of Milky Way, and I met the Doctor just leaving Billy's house, and he sure was a forlorn-looking medico. He's a conscientious doctor, and when things go badly with his patients he's unhappy; he takes it to heart much more than most physicians. I stopped and spoke to him.

"Hello, Doctor," I said, "you look as

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Betty was having the time of her life with meddlesome old Sam Hicks, which was perfectly satisfactory to Sam.

though you hadn't been to bed for a week. Somebody sick?"

"No," he said, "only a lot of measles, nothing serious."

"We've had 'em in our house, thank Heaven," I said, and he smiled, or tried to smile, and passed on. Then the truth burst upon me, and I rushed home to Bill.

"It's all right, it's all right," I cried, "the Doc's gone and done it."

"Done what?" asked Bill.

"Proposed to Betty of course, you addle-pated simp."

"Go on, go on, tell me the rest. Did she take him?"

"Take him! The first time! I should think you'd know better—know Betty better—than that. Of course she wouldn't take him the first time he asked her, after keeping her waiting all these years. She's entitled to her revenge and she's going to get it; any decent girl would."

"Who told you all about it?" asked Bill.

"I saw him coming from Betty's house and he looked as though he hadn't been to bed for a week—he looked like the last rose of summer."

"You sure are a fox, Sherlock," said Bill. "And say, does that let me out? Can I rest up a bit?"

"Rest your head off," I exclaimed "Your job's done—I told you it would come out all right—and, by the way, I guess I'd better put a stop order on those violets."

"Why do that?" asked Bill, facetiously. "Why not get one of the Doc's pads and have your florist send a prescription with each and every bunch? You might write 'em yourself—a big R with a line through the tail, 'to be applied externally, over the heart. Renew three times a week.'"

"Original as thunder, aren't you?" I said, Bill not understanding.

But Bill couldn't worry me—I'd made things right for Betty—I sure had. I, old Fox Sam Hicks. Competition is the life of trade, as sure as you're alive!

After dinner I noticed that Bill was sort of quiet. I asked him what the trouble was.

"Oh nothing," he said.

"You look a bit pensive," I said; "is losing a steady job the reason?"

"Not on your life—I never wanted to lose anything as much as I've wanted to lose that job. I'm just enjoying my freedom, relaxing." He blew smoke upward for a while. Then he said, "Betty *is* a nice girl, Sam. I've gotten to like her a lot; she improves with knowing. I'm almost sorry she's nuts on the Doc."

Bill is a great jollier. "Why didn't you try to get her before it was too late?" I asked.

"Snake in the grass stuff, eh? Hardly; you wouldn't have me be a traitor to the cause, would you? But you know, Sam, I can understand how a fellow feels when he's one of three, and the one who gets left out in the cold. Betty's an awfully nice girl." Again Bill blew smoke hither and thither for a while, and then suddenly he turned to me. "Sam, are you sure she turned the Doc down?" he asked.

"I saw the Doc coming from her house looking like a death's head and anxious to be alone. You can draw your conclusions as well as I can."

He looked at me an instant as though he had a great problem to solve.

"Sammy, old fox," he said finally, "if Betty said 'no' to the Doc she's still free technically, isn't she? Why shouldn't I try my luck? Maybe she turned him down on account of her having her eye on me."

"Maybe she did. I hadn't thought of that." Bill was having a grand time kidding me.

"Let's go round and find out about it," he said.

"You leave things as they are," I said. "The first thing you know you'll spill the beans, the ones we've gathered so carefully."

"Anyway let's go round and cheer her up—she's probably awful lonely, waiting for the Doc to come back,"

"Leave the way open for the Doc," I said, "or you'll be gumming the whole works."

"Let the Doc work for her, if he wants her," said Bill. "You stay here and rot if you want to—I'm going round and look things over."

Bill arose, and started Betty-ward, and stopped. "Say, Sam, suppose I find Betty's off the Doc for good, on account of me, do you furnish the engagement ring along with the wi-o-lets and bum-bums and other knick-knacks, if I put it over?"

I looked round for something to throw at him—he understood and departed quickly.

I'd lost track of the expense account, though I knew it was upward of two hundred dollars. It was the best investment I'd ever made, even if Bill was a liberal spender at times.

After a while I got lonely and wandered down the street; maybe I was curious. I didn't see any one about, and really without thinking what I was doing I walked up Betty's steps, and suddenly I heard a crash, a sort of dull, heavy, thumpy crash,

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and in the darkness I saw the gray form of Betty, sitting up in the hammock, I walked toward her and I saw Bill on the floor, beside the hammock.

"Bill, get up!" Betty commanded, and then she buried her face in her hands and laughed.

"It's Old Man Fox," said Bill, and he scrambled to his feet.

"Why are you a fox?" Betty asked me. "Bill says you are."

"Why don't you ask Bill?"

"I did, and he won't tell me."

Betty had risen, and she stepped forward and came into the light that shone through the window. Betty's hair was largely, if not entirely, over and below her right ear. She realized it too late, and blushed, and I looked at Bill.

"If you care anything for my good name, you'd better tell him," she said to Bill.

"And spoil Old Man Fox's happiness! Never!"

"Sam, why does Bill call you an Old Fox? He's been doing it for—for——"

"Since the third bunch of wi-o-lets came," said Bill.

"So, as long ago as that, eh? Pretty quick work, I should say," I remarked.

"It wasn't really, Sam, honestly," Betty said, stammering a little. "I know it sounds so, but you see we both knew the very first night and—and—what was the use of waiting? Though it didn't really happen till—till—well, not very long ago." Betty was blushing—she wasn't pale any more—and she sure was beautiful.

I WENT home later on, leaving them there, and as I went I wondered whether getting Betty out of the bank and into the place she belonged was compensation for putting the Doctor out in the cold and leaving him there.

I met the Doctor a day or two later. I searched his face for signs of grief and didn't find any.

"You did a good job, Sam," he said, "a bully good job."

"Eh?"

"Now don't be modest," he exclaimed. "I've just come from seeing her father and they told me all about it. She ought to have been married long ago, but then she's not the sort of girl to rush into matrimony rashly. Betty's a fine girl."

"Yes," I said, "Betty's a fine girl, and Bill's a good man. But I'm afraid that I can't take any of the credit—they fixed it up between themselves in jig time. You're looking better than the last time I saw you. What was the matter with you the other day, when you looked as though you hadn't been to bed for a week?"

The Doctor looked at me for a moment as though he didn't understand, then the light came. "Oh, I remember, you mean that afternoon I'd been to see Betty's father. Stomach—I'd eaten something that didn't agree with me. I have to be careful, and I'm not—always." The Doctor grinned and went on down the street.

So the Doc wasn't out in the cold after all. "You're a hell of a fine fox you are, Sam Hicks," I mused. "But just wait till Mrs. Hicks gets home—maybe she won't hear a few things about being so all fired smart and knowing so much about everything and mighty near getting me in a peck of trouble as a result."

However, I have heard, and I know it's so, that some of the greatest discoveries of science have been stumbled upon by men who were searching for quite other things. Maybe I've got the instinct of the fox, after all.

But whether Sammy is a fox or just plain goat, Betty's happy, which is what counts, and I'm happy, even if she and Bill look at me with queer expressions and laugh, ever and anon.

William hasn't handed me a bill for the ring yet.

The Art Editor Speaks

THE rare good fortune which enables us to present with Samuel Merwin's serial, "In Red and Gold" which begins on page 9, illustrations prepared by Cyrus Leroy Baldridge deserves a special word of explanation.

Necessarily the majority of magazine drawings have very little significance if we expect them to visualize the *mise en scène* of a story. And it is refreshing to find in the authenticity of Mr. Baldridge's details the convincing quality of "done on the spot."

Mr. Baldridge is but lately arrived from the land of the Manchu and of the beautiful Princess *Hui Fei*, and it was immediately upon his return, when his impressions were still sharp and his note-book crammed, that we seized upon him to illustrate Mr. Merwin's Chinese story.

Mr. Baldridge has been in the heart of the China pictured by Mr. Merwin. He left Shanghai —which he found overrun by salesmen screaming at Charlie Chaplin movies—and burrowed into the interior, first to Soochow, noted for its beautiful women, its swarming canals and its famous Roast Duck; through Hangchow, with its fairy lake and glorious landmarks of ancient court life; thence to Nanking, with its tombs, Thieves' Market and interminable walls. From there he went up the Yangtse, passing the beggar tubs of Wu-hu, through the narrow stone streets of Gnanking, and on to Shantung along the very path taken by *Hui Fei*. Here the artist steeped himself in the atmosphere of Tai-Shan, the famous and beautiful sacred mountain, and lived high up on the rocks among the temples built in honor of Confucius. At Chu-Fu it was Baldridge's privilege to be the guest of honor at the annual celebration held by the great philosopher's descendants, the Kungs.

Then followed a tour of rebellious Korea, and the return by way of Mukden to Peking, where Baldridge lived for a month in an old tea house by the west wall of the ancient Tartar city. Here, mingling with the coolies, the hawkers, and the swarming picturesque life, he gathered more material.

With the careful preparation resulting from such a tour, the readers of this remarkable story will enjoy the additional pleasure of having before them really informative pictures.

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Backwoods Chess

By Clarence Budington Kelland

Here's Tom Dowd again—Kelland's whimsical old backwoods figure who has entertained you before. This time he shows he knows how to play a long game of chess—with underhand opponents, and stakes that run from clothes-pins to a railroad and a couple of towns. This chess of his is a game you'll enjoy. And there are more of Kelland's stories to come.

WHEN Old Man Tabor raged it was worth walking miles to see. He belonged to a generation that knew how to lose its temper. The insidious influences of civilization have so worked upon a race whose ancestors were used to go berserk in a grand and impressive manner, that it may be said to have lost the art of flying into a passion. Old Man Tabor was an atavism. He could out-berserk Theodolf the Icelander.

If he had a single defect in the perfection of his rage, it was that he did not use profanity in the sense in which profanity is used by your lumberjack. His oaths, if oaths they were, were of his own manufacture, and savored not in the least of disrespect for omnipotence or disregard for decency. But his use of ordinary language in the form of invective was so sincere and so thorough that one all but lost sight of the fact that he failed to reinforce it with profanity.

"The dad-twisted, sap-rotted, pizen-blooded, crooked-souled, underhanded skunk!" Old Man Tabor roared at Tom Dowd, his walking boss. "The sneakin', crawlin', hand-bitin' cross betwixt a carrion-eatin' crow and a weasel! I'll git my hands onto him 'fore this day's sun goes down, and it'll take a whole wham-dingled hospital to tell from the pieces that he was ever misjudged to be a human bein'! I'll bust every bone in his white-livered carcass, and when I git through touchin' him up nobody'll b'lieve he ever walked on anythin' except all fours. To-day, by Golly."

Tom Dowd looked out of the window placidly, as if making a necessary observation. "Wa-al," he said, turning to his employer, "all I got to say is, you got a darn fine day fer it."

"Fer twelve year I give him a salary and my confidence, and now, without so much as shakin' his rattles in warnin', he bites me where it'll do the most harm."

"I allus told you his eyes was too close together."

"You did, did you? But you never put forward any proofs, and when I trust a man I trust him till somebody proves he hain't wuth it. Why didn't you prove it, that's what I want to know? Why didn't you prove it?"

"Because," said Tom with the placidity from which nothing seemed potent to shake him, "you're sich a doggone pig-headed cuss I knowed it wa'n't wuth my while to try. What's he done, anyhow? You hain't done nothin' but beller since I come in."

"Done! Done! He's quit me, that's what, and sneaked over and stole the Satterlee contract. That's what he's done, and the' haint been a slinkin'er thing done in this here world since the ol' serpent clumb the tree and fetched down an apple."

"Um!" said Tom Dowd. It was important. The loss of the Satterlee contract was sufficient excuse to throw any man into a rage, and when coupled with treachery by an old and trusted employee, it would all but justify anybody in setting fire to his own barn.

The Satterlee contract had been an asset of the Tabor Lumber Company for ten years. It was a sort of insurance policy of market conditions. In itself it was handsomely profitable, but if it had shown never a penny on the right side of the ledger, it would have been worth a great deal of money, because it stabilized the market on last-blocks, clothes-pins and turned stock.

The Satterlee contract was an agreement by which the Tabor Lumber Company bought the total output of the Satterlee Woodenware Company at a set price, and then marketed that product itself. For years Satterlee, owning cheap timber, and in a position to hire cheap labor, had been an outlaw in the woodenware world. His price had always been just enough under the accepted market to cause unlimited trouble. He always undersold everybody, and if his competitors dropped to meet his price, he would drop still lower. It was almost solely his fault that for half a dozen years the woodenware business had shown small and rare profits. Then Old Man Tabor had made his proposition, and Satterlee accepted it. Old Man Tabor had averaged a profit of thirty thousand a year from the contract itself, and nobody could say how many times that he had realized as a profit from his own operations in consequence of a stable market. And now Milton Kelley, Tabor's sales manager, had quit his job between two days, just when the Satterlee contract expired, and had stolen it for himself.

"BUT Ren," said Tom Dowd, "didn't you know that contract was runnin' out?"

"Asked Kelley about it weeks ago. He said he'd look it up, but he said the' wa'n't no hurry about it—the whelp!"

"How'd he git it away from us?"

"Raised our ante five thousand dollars, and let on we wa'n't goin' to renew anyhow. He kin sit still on the seat of his pants and make twenty-five thousand dollars a year out of it without turnin' his hand."

"Um!" said Tom Dowd. "Don't seem like we ought to set quiet and let him get away with it."

"Hain't goin' to. I'm goin' out to look fer him, and when I come acrost him——"

"That idee's full of pleasure, Ren, but it don't do no good so fur's business goes. You better buy that mill and timber off of Satterlee."

"What good? Kelley's got a five-year contract that can't be busted—and I hain't the contract-bustin' kind, even with a crook like him."

"Ren, you lemme look into this here a few days. Jest sit tight; only you got to agree to back up whatever I do."

"I'll back up anythin' to git that skunk's hide—pervidin' its square and above-board."

"Best thing 's fer me to cruise around a little. No tellin' what might turn up. Too many contracts in that deal to suit me if I was in it. Satterlee's got a contract for stumpage with the Groogins people, and he's got a contract with Antoine Le Quatte for loggin' and yardin', and another contract with the Narrow Gauge for haulin' to the mill. Can't never say but what somebody's slipped up some'eres."

TOM DOWD went away and was absent for a week. Before that period elapsed Old Man Tabor had arrived at a point where an ordinary murder would have seemed puerile. What he saw and suffered called for prolonged tortures of refined horror. First, the Banks people canceled an order for ten mixed cars. Then telegrams began to arrive from customers couched in almost identical language, asking about the market, and why the Tabor Company was fifteen cents above the quoted rate on clothes-pins. The expected had happened. Kelley had gone onto the market with a cut, and the stable condition existing before had been disrupted. The trade held back, anticipating a price war with all articles of woodenware selling down and down and down as they had done in the old cutthroat days.

Tabor wrote telegrams himself and tore them up, and wrote them and tore them up. His first thought was war. He would show Kelley how to cut prices. If Kelley wanted to undersell the market, Tabor would show him what underselling really meant. But always he held off waiting for Tom Dowd to come back. In his mind was a sharp recollection of old days when he had loaded his product on cars at a price less than the actual cost of manufacture, and an equally keen appreciation of the length of time it would require for the market to become stable and profitable again.

"Once you git prices down," he bellowed, "Sam Scratch can't git 'em back again for years. Jobbers load up their warehouses on low prices, and then, even when they're stocked low ag'in you can't get 'em to buy. If a fight comes, it'll mean five years of workin' for nothin'."

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Tom Dowd came back, but he brought with him little news to gladden Old Man Tabor's heart. The old man was inclined to believe Tom had allowed himself to be sidetracked for once, for Tom wanted to talk timber, cheap timber, and only beat about the bush when it came to discussing Kelley and the stolen contract.

"The's two pieces you kin git—two towns. Good timber—I cruised it. I kin pick 'em up cheap, and while we hain't needin' 'em now, they'll show well one of these days. One of 'em is short, an eighty—jest a strip down the easterly side. It's been logged and cleared, and a feller's kind of farmin' it. It lays right between the two pieces of timber, but that hain't fatal, seems as though."

"Buy 'em. Buy 'em," said the Old Man. "Buy 'em and git 'em off your mind. I didn't let you go off up there to look at timber. That's your failin', Tom. You can't see a piece of timber without wantin' to grab it, no more'n a kid kin see a bag of caramels."

"I optioned both chunks," said Tom.

"Huh."

"And," said Tom, "I'm kind of figgerin' on buyin' the farm fer myself. Might want to settle onto it some day when I git rusty in the j'ints."

"Buy it, and be doggoned. What about Kelley? That's what I aim to find out. He's raisin' murky blazes with the market."

"Um! Kelley— Um! Say, what's this I hear about export openin' up. Billy was sayin' you had a nibble for a hundred cars for England, spread over a year."

"Don't want it. Might take a piece of it."

"You git that contract. Git it quiet. Git it so quiet you can't hear it yourself."

"What fer, Tom?"

"Be I runnin' this rucus or be you? You git that English contract tied up, and lemme be with your bank-account. I can't do nothin' if I got to be talkin' all the time. Listen, we git that contract, and we shet our mouths and hire some factor or broker or jobber or somethin' to carry it in his name, and sub-contract it to Kelley—Hundred cars 'll put a dent in his output, won't it? Git a good export price and he'll swaller it. Take him off'n the domestic market, perty nigh. Won't leave him more'n forty cars to peddle."

"Be you askin' me to help that skunk make money?"

"I be," said Tom, "and you be, or I wash my hands of the hull kaboodle."

"OH, WELL—" Old Man Tabor began to feel more genial. He knew Tom Dowd of old, and Tom Dowd's methods. Tom had some sort of scheme stirring in his shrewd head, but what it was nobody would find out until it was ready to launch. Tom's method of keeping a secret was not to tell all of it even to himself. You had to trust Tom utterly and blindly, or leave him alone, and in the circumstances, as always, Old Man Tabor sat back and grumbled and growled and said a thousand cutting things about his walking boss, but let his walking boss do as he pleased.

Consequently a Mr. Rosenbloom, of Boston, called upon Mr. Kelley within ten days.

"I have a contract with Tweedle and Tweedle, of Liverpool," he said, "for one hundred cars of clothes-pins. I've been nosing around with the idea of scattering in ten-car lots, but if I can find one factory to take the lot, a trifle under the market, so I would realize a bit more than my five per cent., I'd think it over."

"That's two-thirds of my output," said Kelley.

"Save you bookkeeping and sales expense—and anxiety. I guarantee the credit of Tweedle and Tweedle. You can bill me, and you'll find I'm responsible."

"It sounds good," said Mr. Kelley, who could foresee, not only a profitable year but a year of leisure, and Mr. Kelley did not look with disgust upon leisure. "What's your proposition?"

"An extra seven and a half per cent."

Now this was attractive to Mr. Kelley, for he was undercutting the market by five per cent., and the probabilities were he would have to go still lower. In the event of a price war he might see himself compelled to sell at four or five tens off list. That would not only pare down profits, but might eliminate them altogether. Of course it would cost other folks a lot of money to get him—but that was no great delight to him. What he wanted was safe money, and money that was not reluctant. This offer of Rosenbloom's was equivalent to an insurance policy.

"It's a deal," he said.

"Of course you'll contract for delivery dates—on the dock. I'll attend to bottoms. The English figure C. I. F."

"Naturally."

"Settled, then. I'll include a clause that you are to deliver in Boston ten cars a month, beginning with February. If cars are not delivered within ten days of the first of each month, I can buy on the open market and you will be responsible for the difference in price."

"Sounds fair," said Kelley, who had no doubt whatever of his ability to deliver.

"How are logging operations?"

"Coming well. We'll begin hauling shortly. We've yarded upward of four million feet now."

"Mail you a contract to-morrow," said Rosenbloom.

A WEEK following this the whole section of the state was amazed to learn that Tom Dowd and Old Man Tabor had parted company. Varying tales were told of the row that precipitated the parting. Some men bragged that they had seen Old Man Tabor throw Tom out of the office; others related how Tom had laid out the Old Man with a peavey handle—but the reason for the trouble was not published. It was said to be personal, and the animosity bitter. However that may be, Tom declined all offers from other lumbermen and disappeared. A few days later it was reported he was sitting around the little hotel in Satterlee, sulking and making morose talk about his former employer.

All of which gave Mr. Kelley food for thought. He had not worked for Old Man Tabor several years for nothing, nor without becoming acquainted with the character of that robust individual. He knew that Lorenzo Tabor nursed a grudge lovingly and counted each day lost which elapsed before an overdue payment of an old score was made. When Mr. Kelley, by guile and chicanery acquired the Satterlee contract, he knew he was courting trouble, but Mr. Kelley rather fancied his own astuteness, and figured with some degree of cheerfulness that his proposition was air-tight and safe from any attack. He was willing to match wits with Old Man Tabor and Tom Dowd, and had taken what precautions he was able to minimize the danger of the attack which was sure to come.

So, knowing his antagonists, he took the row between Tabor and Dowd with a grain of salt. When Dowd appeared in Satterlee, Kelley figuratively slipped on his armor and closed the visor of his helmet. Something was going to happen. He did not see exactly what it would be, but he knew well it would be calculated for his discomfort.

HOWEVER, though Kelley had a close watch kept over him, Tom Dowd seemed to do nothing but smoke and grumble. It is true he made a couple of visits to the office of the Registrar of Deeds, and Kelley succeeded in discovering what record books he examined. This told him little, however it caused him uneasiness, for if Tom was interested in land records, something must be wrong somewhere; there must be a vulnerable spot in some title or leasehold.

As things lay Kelley could see the possibility of danger only to actual manufacturing operations. If he could manufacture, his market was assured at a satisfactory price. Old Man Tabor and Tom Dowd were both woodsmen, and their shrewdness was of the woods. It would not take the form of sharp business practise—whatever it was they had in mind—but would be more direct and primitive. He laid his thoughts before Satterlee who showed him an ironclad stumpage contract, and a second contract with the Narrow Gauge to deliver logs in the yard.

"Can't see where the old man's got a chance to make trouble," Satterlee said. "We've our logs cut and yarded. The Narrow Gauge will get 'em here. We'll do the rest."

"Own both banks of the river?"

"Just this side where the mill is. We lease the other side where the log yard is."

"Uh-huh. How about the lease. Be in a pretty fix if the logs came down and we had no place to put 'em."

"No worry about that. Could 'a' bought that piece of land any time these ten years for a thousand dollars or so, but what's the use. Pay a hundred a year rental for it. 'Tain't no good to nobody else. B'longs to the Widder Knox."

"But if somebody should buy it and we couldn't pile logs there, where would we be?"

"Up a stump. No room to pile on this side. Need all the space for hot ponds and sich. But don't you worry. Nobody's goin' to fuss with that land."

But Kelley did worry about it until a new anxiety drove it out of his mind. Young Nate Tabor arrived in Satterlee that afternoon and went to the hotel. In the parlor he met Old Tom Dowd face to face. They nodded but did not speak. Kelley rightly surmised Tabor's arrival to be the opening of the campaign against him—and when he saw young Tabor splash through the mud to the Widow Knox's house, he rushed off to Satterlee in a cold sweat. He would have been more than perplexed if he could have heard the conversation between Nate and the Widow.

"I'm Nate Tabor, son of Lorenzo Tabor," he said to the old lady.

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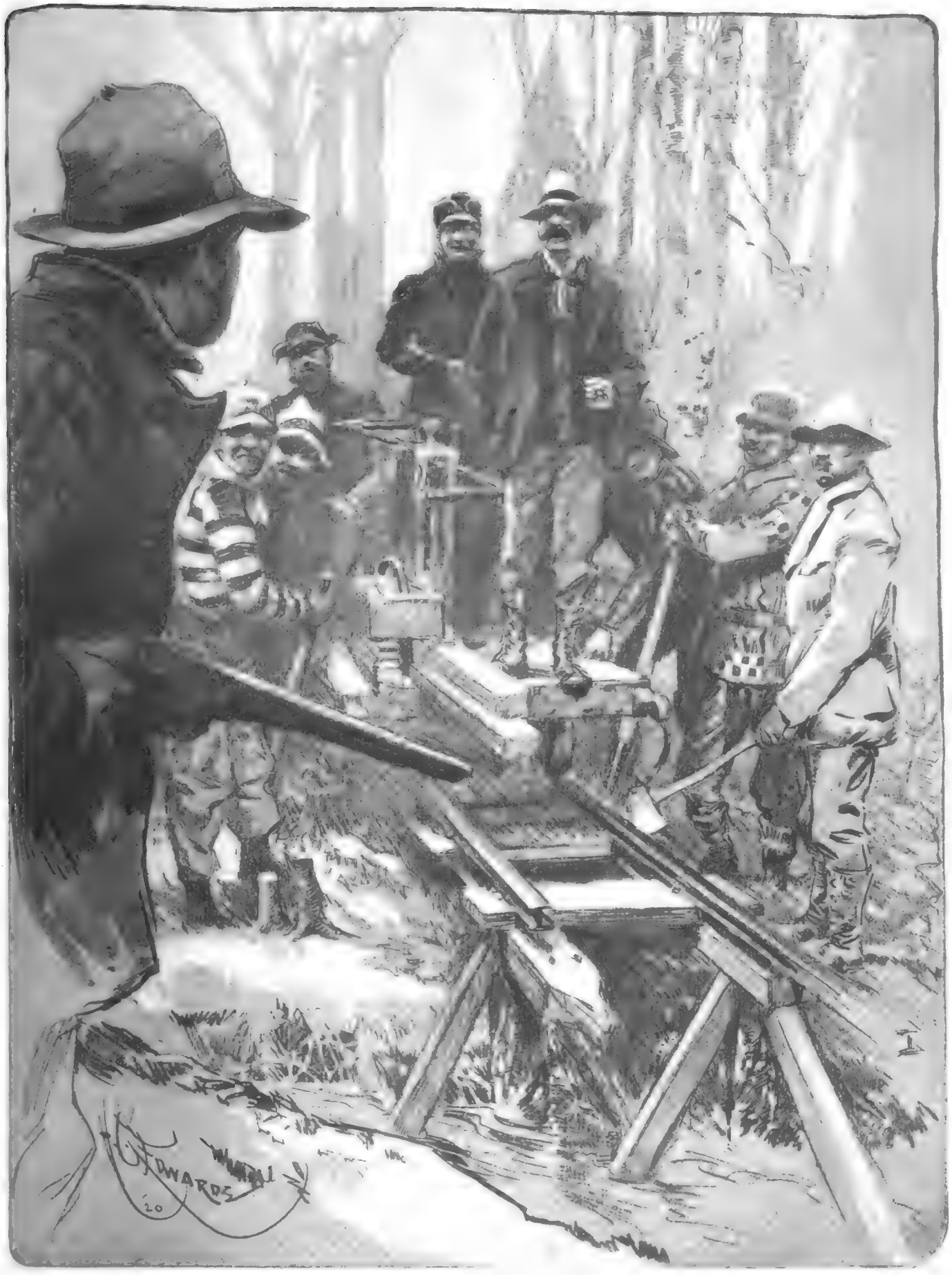

"You fellers better keep on your own side," he said. "Fust feller to step acrost 'll git a chanct to chaw on buckshot."

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"Land sakes! Hain't seen you since you was knee-high to a grasshopper. How be you and all your folks?"

"Everybody's well. I came to see you on business, Mrs. Knox. Dad says he's owed you a favor longer than he has any right to owe. You took care of mother once when she was sick—back in the camps."

"I was cookin' for your pa in a spruce camp."

"You own a piece of land across the river from Satterlee's mill—where he yards his logs."

"Calc'late to."

"Would you sell it?"

"Been a-tryin' to sell it to Satterlee for ten year."

"Well, you're going to sell it. How much would you take?"

"Thousand dollars, and be glad to git it."

Nate smiled. "You can expect Satterlee or a man by the name of Kelley here in an hour. You refuse to sell. Tell 'em you have an offer, but don't say what it is. Just refuse to sell to them. I'll be back to-morrow. Now remember."

The old lady's shrewd eyes glinted. She saw something was in the wind, she did not guess what, but that it was going to be profitable to her she was certain. "I'll do jest like you say," she said.

Therefore, when Satterlee and Kelley arrived an hour later, and began sounding her out about the land, she was a most unsatisfactory person to deal with.

"I'm ready to buy that piece of land, Mrs. Knox," said Satterlee.

"You been so long about it I've plumb lost my appetite to sell."

"Pay you a thousand dollars—cash."

"I got a kind of an offer for it now. More'n a thousand."

"How much?"

"I hain't sayin'."

"But you haven't sold?"

"Not yit."

"Give you two thousand."

She shook her head decidedly. "Seems like that land's gittin' valuable. Calc'late I'll hang on to it a spell."

Satterlee raised his offer twice more without results.

"You come back to-morrow night, and I'll see," said the Widow Knox. And that was the best to be gotten out of her.

VIGILANTLY Kelley and Satterlee kept watch over Nate Tabor next day, so vigilantly that they quite lost sight of Old Tom Dowd, who was enabled to disappear and go about his peculiar concerns unhampered and unwatched. This condition obtained for three days with Kelley and Satterlee bidding, as they supposed, against Nate Tabor. On the evening of the fourth day the old lady surrendered, and Satterlee acquired the coveted land for twelve thousand dollars in cash, a piece he might have had for a twelfth of that sum any time these dozen years. It hurt, but it was necessary.

"Now we're safe," he told Kelley. "There hain't another flaw anywheres. There's no place Old Man Tabor kin reach us now."

Nate Tabor left town, evidently discomfited. Tom Dowd had disappeared, and for two weeks everything went along as smoothly and efficiently as anybody could desire. Log trains pulled into the yard with their burden of beech and birch and maple. Machinery chugged and ground and whirred, and manufactured product piled up in the warehouse. Then, one Tuesday, not a log arrived; not a train pulled into the yard. Satterlee called by telephone, and was told that three trains had gone down the Narrow Gauge that day. He had only hung up the receiver when the bell summoned him back.

"Log trains held up at Belden's farm. Don't know what's up. The train crew reports rails torn up and a crazy man with a shotgun on the job."

"Get after it quick. If you can't handle it, call the sheriff. We have logs enough to run three days. It's up to you to get through, crazy man or no crazy man."

"He seems to be watchin' this end. Why don't you load a gang on a handcar and ketch him from behind?"

WITHIN half an hour Satterlee and Kelley with half a dozen men from the mill were driving toward Belden's farm on a rickety handcar over the uneven roadbed of the Narrow Gauge. It was one of those more or less temporary railways laid down in timber regions to tap certain timberlands during logging operations, and to be taken up and moved somewhere else when the land was logged off. It was not a railroad in the legal sense, but was one of those casual affairs which borrowed or seized or rented their right of way while it was useful to them. This branch had been on the ground some four years, but, with Satterlee using only some four millions of logs a year, it might remain another six or seven. It crossed the Belden farm of eighty acres from end to end along the westerly edge.

At the southern border of the farm the handcar came to a stop. The boundary at that spot was a brook, and the log trestle crossing it was no longer there. Rails and trestle had disappeared, and on the farther side of the brook appeared a sign:

NO TRESPASSING BY RAILROADS
OR ANYTHING ELSE
BY ORDER OF THE OWNER

"Now what the devil does this mean?" Kelley asked.

"Don't know. Here, you men, pile off and mend this trestle. Get a move on you."

The men leaped down, armed with axes and saws, and advanced toward the brook. As they reached its brink, a black felt hat appeared among the alders on the opposite side; then a double-barreled shotgun came into view, and a person in a mackinaw jacket and a week's growth of beard stepped into sight.

"You fellers better keep on your own side," he said. "Fust feller to step acrost 'll git a chanct to chaw on buckshot."

"Who the devil are you?" Satterlee yelled.

"Me? I'm St. Peter a-guardin' of the gate."

"What does this mean? What's up? Why are you interfering with this railroad?"

"Orders."

"Whose orders?"

"Feller that owns the farm. He says he hain't goin' to have no more engines a-snortin' across his proppity. Yaas. Goin' to keep chickens, he is. Uh-huh. And he says them engines'll scare his hens so's they won't lay. He says I was to tell you you could git your railroad and carry it off with you, but that nobody wouldn't never run no more bullgines across it."

"You'd better put down that gun and clear out. You'll get into trouble."

"Who? Me? Trouble? Mister, I spread trouble on my flapjacks instid of sirup."

"I'll give you one chance. Clear out of there and let us go to work—or I'll call the sheriff."

"Sheriff? Now I wouldn't go to do that. Sheriff's a nice man. Know him well. Know him ree-markable well. He gimme this to wear." The man unbuttoned his mackinaw and displayed a shield on the breast of his shirt. "Calc'late to be a deputy myself. Be you Satterlee?"

"Yes."

"Feller by the name of Kelley there?"

"Yes."

"Come to the edge of the brook, you two."

Kelley and Satterlee stepped forward, and the deputy extended two folded papers across the water to them. "Some kind of legal papers the sheriff let on I was to give you fellers. Look 'em over—take your time—take your time."

Kelley and Satterlee took their time; they opened the papers and read in legal phraseology that they were two of the defendants in the case of Tom Dowd against the Narrow Gauge *et al.*, and that all and several of the defendants were enjoined from trespassing upon the lands of the complainant with trains, engines, cars, railroads, rails, ties, and so forth and so on *ad nauseam*.

"Better pile on to your leetle handcar and go away from here," said the deputy.

Satterlee scowled at Kelley; Kelley scowled at Satterlee. Their men clambered back on the car, and sullenly they started on the return journey to the mill. When they arrived there, they found Tom Dowd sitting in the office.

"AFTERNOON, gentlemen," said Tom. "Been out the railroad a piece, they tell me."

"What does this mean, Dowd? What's this injunction? What do you think you're doing?"

"Now, jest set and rest your face. Long story. Got to smoke while I'm tellin' it." He filled his pipe placidly and then went on. "The hull thing starts with Kelley there. Kelley, he done somethin' most decent folks wouldn't be proud of doin'. He bit the hand that'd been feedin' him. Now, Ren Tabor hain't no feller to bite and then set down and bask in the sun. Nope."

"Get to business," snapped Satterlee.

Tom puffed calmly. "You hain't in good comp'ny, Satterlee—and neither's Kelley for that matter. Kind of a sneakin', underhanded pair, the two of you. Wa-al, Ren he told me to look after this little deal, so I done it. Now, here you fellers be. My proposition, Satterlee, is fer you to sell this mill, and fer Kelley jest to cancel his contract and clear out, standin' what loss he's been to."

"You're crazy, Dowd."

"Maybe so. Maybe so. Got a contract to deliver a hundred cars of pins, hain't you? Ten cars a month? If you can't git logs, Kelley, you can't make pins. Nope. Feller by the name of Rosenbloom 'll be on your neck. Damages. I figger it'll cost ye some'eres in the neighborhood

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She shook her head decidedly. "Seems like that land's gittin' valuable. Calc'late I'll hang on to it a spell."

of three hunderd dollars a car to make good. That's thirty thousand. Got it? Don't b'lieve you have."

"We'll get logs," said Kelley.

"Nope." Tom spoke placidly and with certainty. "While young Nate was attractin' your attention to the Widder Knox, I got a chanct to dicker around some. Uh-huh. Bought me a farm. Off of Belden. Railroad goes across it. Narrow Gauge had a kind of an agreement with Belden, but they've busted it. Agreed to pay him two hundred a year for crossin' his place, and to put a telephone into his house, and some road fixin' through his place. Hain't paid the two hunderd in a year. Hain't put in no telephone, hain't done nothin' else. Didn't worry Belden much. Said he'd git his money some day. Guess he would. But I bought the farm off of him, and the agreement runs with the land. Took an assignment of all his rights to boot. Uh-huh. Went right to court and got an injunction, and, b'jing, it'll hold."

There was silence for a moment or two, then Satterlee spoke. "You haven't got us by a jugful. We'll move that railroad over your line onto Old Man Wilkins's property. He'll give us a right-of-way. Be an expense, but we can do it."

"Maybe so. Dunno any proppity Wilkins owns. If you mean them two towns of timber each side of my farm, he don't own 'em any more. Nope. Ren Tabor bought 'em. Now, jest look where you be. You can't run across my place. Ren won't give no right o' way across *his* timber. To reach this here mill from your camps means you got to build around us, and that means eighteen mile of railroad. Don't it? Around three sides of a town? Looks like it does. You're shet off."

"We'll fight that injunction."

"Go ahead. Lawin' is expensive. Meantime the mill 'll be shet down and damages accruin'. You won't win. Ren Tabor offers a fair price for your mill—if Kelley cancels his contract. That's our best offer. Give you fifty thousand for the plant, lock, stock and barrel, includin' the Widder Knox's piece across the river. Give you fifteen minutes to think it over. Offer shrinks five thousand at the end of that time, and five thousand every quarter of an hour. Better be quick."

They retired to another room. In twelve minutes by the clock they returned, red of face, trembling with impotent rage.

"I'll take—" Satterlee began.

"You'll take what I offer and no argiment. Yes or no?"

"I—I'll take it."

"What about Kelley?"

"I've put ten thousand into this deal——"

"That you'll never git out. Kind of a fine for bein' crooked. Can't be a skunk and profit by it, Kelley. Well?"

"I'll cancel."

"Much obleeged, gentlemen. And now you git somethin' throwed in for nothin'. It's advice. When you do business ag'in, do it aboveboard. Here you tried to gouge Ren Tabor, and I figger he's showed a nice profit on the deal. You can't be no weasel, not in these woods, and git away with your own skin. You come along with me to Lawyer Perkins and sign the papers he's got."

They got up and moved toward the door. As they went out, Tom Dowd turned and said:

"Jest remember that honest brains is always goin' to beat crooked brains. Why? Because honest brains is standin' on firm ground, but crooked brains is slippin' on the edge of a slough. They hain't got no grip to hold, nor no purchase to pry. Ever play chess?"

"No."

"Um. Do ye good. I kind of worked this here out with a chess board."

The Expert Detective

MELVILLE DAVISSON POST, in EVERYBODY'S for October, tells a story that has for its background the tense, hushed atmosphere of a crowded court-room during a murder trial. The case for the defendants is seemingly hopeless until their picturesque counsel conducts a skilful cross-examination that comes to a dramatic finale with the revelation of an unsuspected criminal.

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I'll Show You the Town

By Elmer Davis

CHAPTER ONE
Summer Plans

I AM a respectable man. I look respectable; being a college professor, I am regarded as respectable. But I didn't realize how thoroughly respectable until a girl of no importance, whom I was never going to see again, laughed in my face and said:

"Why, Alec! Of course he won't be jealous. Nobody ever thinks of you in that way."

This kindly observation stayed with me when she had sailed away to join her husband; and it stung. It stung none the less because I didn't want her to think of me in that way; because she was only one of a multitude of other men's wives with whom I'd dined and danced through a blameless bachelorhood. Indeed, I'd always been rather proud of the intimate, unsentimental, but affectionate friendship of any number of girls, married and unmarried—girls who used to come to me for advice, and cry on my shoulder when they were lonesome for somebody else, and tell me the story of their lives. They told me their troubles, and said I was a dear; now and then they borrowed money from me; and occasionally one of them would honor me with a—well, a sisterly caress. And that was all.

It was all I had wanted, ever since that one foolish, glorious boy-and-girl affair back in college, seven years ago. I was willing to take a girl to a party when her husband was going out of town; content to be called on to leave the party and take home some victim of a sudden headache. God forgive me, I liked it. While the war was on, and my weak eyes kept me at a desk in Washington while my friends were in France, I did quite a lot to keep up the internal front by cheering up weepy girls who wondered if their husbands were ever coming back. I was harmless and I knew it; but it was something of a shock to find that everybody else knew it, too.

To be sure, harmlessness was hereditary in my family—my father's family, that is. My father was the Reverend Doctor John Knox Deupree, president and professor of moral philosophy in a little coeducational college in the Middle West. He entertained a cheerful faith in the terrors of hell, and saw no moral difference between billiards and burglary; he lived and died poor, and worked himself to death for the college; and he liked it, for it was in the blood. The Deuprees are like that. We've been preachers or college professors for generations; an occasional governor or senator was regarded as something of a black sheep. Our real interest has always been in things like forcordination, the original Adam, and the iota subscript. Thanks to the Deupree temperament, I had reached, at the age of twenty-nine, the dignity of shell-rimmed spectacles and an assistant professorship of Latin in Columbia University; and, apparently, a reputation as a model young man, of whom one never thought in that way.

If you were young and not bad looking, and at heart a regular fellow, how much would you enjoy a universal reputation for being "safe and dependable" with the ladies, so that mamas and sisters-in-law and everybody were accustomed to turn young heiresses and young widows over to you without the slightest afterthought, to entertain as a sort of chaperon—just because you were a professor of Latin and the son of a small-college president and wore big glasses? Professor Deupree was a bachelor of such blameless and uninteresting reputation, and he didn't enjoy it a bit. The tale of how he proceeded to get rid of it makes a story filled and running over with sheer entertainment. It's Mr. Davis's first serial and you'll hope before you reach the final instalment—not his last.

But my mother was a Gaylord. They never said much about the Gaylords at home; they had lived in Kentucky, and I gathered that they were rather a godless lot. But when I got into college—when I was arrested for tearing down the Greek professor's picket fence to feed a carnival bonfire; when the dean of women caught me kissing Lucile in the vestibule of the girls' dormitory—when things like that happened, father would shake his head and say it was my wild Kentucky blood. And when I got away from home the Kentucky blood had more to say for itself. I developed a liking for small talk over tall glasses, and an acute horror at the stern approach of prohibition; and as I reviewed the history of my association with the lady who was so sure her husband wouldn't be jealous, I realized that I had spent entirely too much time dancing in Broadway cafés, when I ought to have been writing a learned book which would earn me a promotion to associate professor. And it had been time wasted, apparently; wasted in more ways than one.

I THOUGHT it all over, on the morning after her unkind remark, as I lay in bed in my stuffy little three-room apartment on Amsterdam Avenue—an apartment that overlooked the university campus, and was only twenty minutes by subway from the bright white lights. There was plenty of time to think it over, for it was the week after commencement, with a summer's leisure ahead of me. Also it was June, and a particularly pleasant June. The ghosts of the Gaylords whispered that I could play for three months; but the ghosts of the Deuprees told me that I ought to sit down and write a book and get promoted. After all, I was twenty-nine; and by that time a man ought to have something to be proud of besides a reputation for rectitude. A proper Deupree would get up and take a cold shower, and go to see Professor McCabe, who pulled the wires that made promotions in the Latin Department. McCabe knew that I intended, some time, to write a book about apartment-house life in ancient Rome. Lately somebody down at Princeton had written erroneously and heretically on that subject, and McCabe hadn't had time to answer him. If I answered him, I could count on that promotion.

But to finish the book before college opened again would mean hard work and no play all summer. And I knew McCabe. He was too busy to write this book himself, but not too busy to spend most of his time telling me how to write it.

I wasn't quite resigned, even yet. I got up and took a hot shower and then looked over the mail which the hall-boy had pushed under the door. No hope there—an invitation from a doctor somebody to deliver an address at some kind of conference — one of the minor annoyances of a professor's life; and a note from my cousin Edith, reminding me that she and Harmon were going to their place at Lenox in a month or so, and that they'd be glad to have me spend August with them. It was an annual offer, which I had accepted once and never again. If I had to take orders, I'd rather take them from McCabe.

I SEEMED to be driven to virtue and a summer of hard work. It was not an alluring prospect; but by nightfall it was a good deal brighter, for I had seen McCabe and heard good news. A full professorship would be vacant next year; men who had been ahead of me had gone away to the wars, or resigned because they needed more money; if I did this book and did it well, I could probably jump a grade and become a full professor at thirty—making twice as much money as I made now, and renowned among men, and particularly among professors, to the everlasting honor of the Deuprees. It wasn't certain, of course; but it was a wonderful chance.

On the strength of the chance, I bought myself an unreasonably expensive dinner at the Claremont, and smoked an unreasonably extravagant cigar as I walked home. But when I shut the door of my little apartment I seemed to hear the iron gates of respectability clanging behind me. Every Deupree turned inhuman as age and dignity closed in on him; and they were closing on me a little too early. On my library table was a photograph in a silver frame—a photograph which had been there for seven years because I had never quite made up my mind to throw it away with the rest of my college souvenirs, but which had received very little attention in those seven years, which had accumulated dust without disturbance—a photograph

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"Oh, my poor child! This is— What in the world are we to do?"

of Lucile. I took it up and stared at it curiously; seven years—but Lucile had thought of me in that way.

The Deupree conscience reminded me, with some impatience, that she hadn't thought of me that way for very long. When I graduated she swore she'd love me forever; and before I'd been away at graduate school six months she married—married a large, rough person named Frank Pemberton, who couldn't talk about the True, the Beautiful and the Good in the engaging fashion that I then commanded, but who did something sinfully profitable on the Chicago Board of Trade. It hurt, then. But it didn't hurt now; and in the seven years there had been many flirtations and many friendships, but nothing like that. I was a fool; I was a Deupree; I had better get to work on that book. And I would have got to work at that very moment if Billy Bonner hadn't come in. Bonner sold automobiles, and lived in the apartment across the landing. The Gaylords would have called him a bounder, and the Deuprees would have been sure he was a child of sin; but somehow I liked him, and just at that moment I'd have been glad of any distraction from duty.

"How's the owl?" he inquired cheerfully. "Don't tell me you're gettin' ready to think some more now that the think factory has shut down for the summer."

"Yes," I admitted, "I'm getting ready to think. What else can I do?"

"What else can you do? You haven't seen our mid-year model yet, have you? Doc, the Sagamore Mid-year Touring Car is a miracle; the biggest, fastest, brightest and best article that was ever offered to the public at nine thousand dollars, f. o. b. Detroit——"

"You know," I interrupted, "that my salary is twenty-five hundred a year. Why make me thirsty?"

"Because I've got one, you boob; and if you wasn't so shy I'd dig up a couple of little fluffs, and we'd run out somewhere into the country and watch the sparkling waters sparkle. No? Think of the ladies, doc; why not throw a ray of pleasure into their poor little lives? I know you can dance, and I've seen you drink liquor; can't do that much longer, you know. And I can furnish the car and sign the checks. What do you say, doc?"

"Get thee behind me, Mephistopheles," I said wearily. "You'll have to hunt up another Faust. I'm going to spend this summer writing a book."

"My first wife wrote a book," Bonner grunted. "'A Soul Betrayed,' she called it. It was about me—nasty, mean thing. That was after she divorced me the second time; first time she didn't mind so much, but two made her mad. And when my second wife was gettin' ready to divorce me, damned if she didn't send her a copy. Don't think it ever sold much, though; I'm still payin' alimony to both of them, which is why I live in this hole in the wall instead of at the Biltmore. Life would be so simple, doc, without the fair sex; and yet you can't keep away from them."

"If you think they can't be kept away from," I said firmly, "watch me this summer. I'm going to write a book."

"Here?"

"Right here. I can't go very far from the university library, and if I went anywhere else— But there's no place to go," I finished rather dolefully.

"No place to go? What's become of your gang?"

"My gang," I said, "was broken up by the war. The girls all went to Paris and got married."

"But hasn't anybody asked you to any parties? They used to."

I tossed him the two letters which had lain on my table since morning.

"There are my invitations. Yes, I know Lenox sounds well, but you don't know my cousin Edith. And the other——"

Bonner read it with a grin.

"'Dr. Lionel Gushmore, secretary of the National Conference on the Segregation of the Socially Inefficient'—what's that?"

"Heaven knows," I groaned, "except that it's the sort of thing a professor is supposed to like and doesn't."

"'—invites Dr. Alexander Deupree to address the conference on Monday evening, June 16, on the subject of "Colleges and the Mentally Unfit." Unless the invitation is declined in writing, acceptance is presumed.' He presumes a lot, don't he?"

"Too much," I said. "A man I never heard of asks me to come to a meeting that would bore me to death and talk on a subject that would bore everybody else to death. Do you wonder I'd rather write a book?"

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Bonner was reading on, with signs of interest.

"Did you read the rest of this, doc?"

"That was enough."

"Oh, no. Never turn down a contract that you haven't read. Get this. 'The conference will be held at Maplecrest Inn, Westchester County, New York, June 13 to 20 inclusive.' Ever been to Maplecrest?"

"Never heard of it."

"Well, you wouldn't, on your salary. One of these big country hotels with a golf-course and tennis-courts and an indoor swimming-pool, a dance floor that's a dream and an orchestra straight from Jazzville, and a bar—oh, boy! Once there you never forget it. I'd go to that conference."

"I have a bank account," I protested, "and it took hard work to save the money. I don't want to throw it away on a thing like this."

He laughed.

"The best is yet to come. 'By arrangement, all expenses of speakers and delegates will be defrayed by the conference.' And believe one who has been there, that means that somebody has put up about $300 per speaker and delegate. No wonder acceptance is presumed. Who would break Santa Claus's heart?"

"If somebody is putting up the money," I objected, "somebody expects to get something out of it."

But this was an evasion, a last despairing effort of the Deupree conscience. Philanthropists who financed gatherings of the learned were not unknown; and my soul was on its back, struggling to keep the fingers of Temptation away from its throat. True, the conference would delay the beginning of my book; but it wouldn't last long, and I could work all the better for a holiday in the country. For, once on the hotel register, I could forget most of the conference and give my attention to the tennis-courts and the pool. Nobody but McCabe would care where I went; I could think up some excuse for McCabe; and how much better I could work after that week of rest!

THE Deupree conscience knew that all this was the voice of the tempter, and he would probably have tempted in vain if Fate hadn't intervened on his side. The doorbell rang; it was a messenger boy with a telegram.

"Probably a bid to a house-party," said Bonner hopefully. "Tell me nobody asks you anywhere!"

But it wasn't anything about a house-party. It was signed by the scholarly clergyman who had been president of Wyndham College since my father's death; and it suggested an atmosphere of agitation.

> Delighted you are to speak at Maplecrest. Great opportunity before you. Meet me Holland House to-morrow afternoon three-thirty and learn all. Greatest urgency. Welfare of our college may depend on you.
>
> A. JUDSON GOODHUE.

I tossed it over to Bonner.

"Acceptance seems to have been presumed in a hurry," I observed. "I don't know what's in all this; but if it's something I can do for my old college I'll have to do it. It's in the blood."

"And you'll have to do it at Maplecrest," Bonner added, "with all expenses defrayed by special arrangement. Hard life for us Fausts, ain't it, doc?"

CHAPTER TWO

A Couple of Odd Jobs

AS IT happened, McCabe forestalled my excuses. He telephoned me the next morning that he had to go to Philadelphia for a few days, and would advise me not to start the book till he came back; there were some general considerations of method that he wanted to discuss with me. He knew, of course, how I'd chafe at the delay; but I'd find something to do——

I would. But there were others whom I had forgotten, who specialized on finding things for me to do. As I was writing out a somewhat superfluous acceptance of the invitation to Maplecrest, my cousin Edith called up and demanded my presence at lunch.

"Our plans have been changed rather suddenly," she explained. "Harmon has to go to China to see about some coal-mines, and of course I'm going with him. And there's something I'll have to leave to you——"

"Of course; of course," I responded like a well-trained Deupree. "When does the train leave?"

"Don't be silly. We're not going for two or three weeks yet. But I want to talk things over with you," which meant, of course, that she would talk things over at me. But there was something she would have to leave to me. I hoped it was her limousine.

So I appeared at Edith's Park Avenue apartment in a hopeful mood. Perhaps my good cheer was due to the fact that Edith was going away; she was a Deupree, and she took Deupreeishness somewhat too much to heart, I thought. It happened that I was the only surviving man in the family, which might have given a certain prestige; but by virtue of being some ten years older, and of having married a man with more money than ten generations of Deuprees had ever heard of, Edith thought she had a divine right to order me around. And I let her do it.

Well, it wasn't the limousine. I found that out by judicious inquiry at the outset. But the prospect of my book thrilled her; she was slow in coming to the point; and at last, with the hour of my appointment with Goodhue drawing near, I asked her.

"I have a little friend who's come to town for the summer," she explained. "Hazel Deming. Have I told you about her?"

A Deupree rose up in my soul and abolished a Gaylord as I answered:

"You don't need to tell me about her. I'll be too busy with this book to entertain girls."

"This isn't a case of entertainment," said Edith. "At least, not exactly. Her father was a sort of partner of Harmon's in some mining ventures in Nevada; a—a somewhat uncouth man, but of very good character. He died just as the mines began to pay; it was really too bad. Hazel's mother had been dead for years, so she finally decided to come East. And Harmon and I felt that we stood rather—well, in the place of her parents, you see—but we're going to China."

"And you want me to find her a job," I concluded. "I won't have time."

"Hazel doesn't need a job," said Edith. "She's nineteen, and came into the money last year."

"Enough to live on?" I asked absently.

"About twelve million dollars."

"What? In the name of—of grandfather Athanasius Deupree, what can I do with twelve million dollars?"

"Don't be flippant, Alec. You can do a great deal for Hazel; and unfortunately you'll have to do a good deal of it right at the outset, I'll be so busy packing— You see, she never had any advantages; she's always lived in mining towns till last year, when I believe she was at school or college somewhere in California. And she doesn't know. I think you'd better begin by finding her a place to live."

"Send her the real estate section of one of the Sunday papers," I recommended.

"She's here now," Edith informed me, "and living in a perfectly impossible way. She leased a suite of eighteen rooms at the Plaza. Said she wanted to have room to turn around."

"I have no objection to her turning around," I suggested. "Let her live."

"This is no time for nonsense, Alec. Really, I feel that I have a—a very serious duty to Hazel; only my prior duty to Harmon conflicts with it. So——"

"So you want me to do your duty," I finished. "I see. Go on, Edith. What do you want me to do?"

"WELL, help her find an apartment more suited to her—her years, first of all. And find her a capable companion, and some maids——"

"Is she alone?"

"I wish she were. She has a woman with her—I don't believe she knows she needs a maid—a—a very common woman, who kept some sort of a low boarding-house where they lived before they had money. You'd better persuade Hazel to get rid of her; she's quite impossible. And then—of course she's just a child, and likely to spend her money foolishly——"

"She's not likely to refrain because I tell her to be sensible," I suggested.

"Oh, she'll do what you say. She's a very nice little thing; but she's just a schoolgirl, Alec; she'll be terribly awed by your spectacles and your Ph. D. Besides, she knows you're a Deupree."

I began to be desperate.

"But perhaps she doesn't know what a terrible and awful thing a Deupree is," I suggested. "Why don't you get some of the women you know to tell her about everything?"

"They're all out of town," said Edith, "or going out of town. I could get her invitations, of course; but Hazel has never been east of Denver before, and she says she means to spend the summer seeing New York. She's rather stubborn. Besides, there are things you can do for her that a woman can't. It's a rather delicate subject, Alec, but you see she is so young. Unless somebody takes charge of her and tells her what not to do she might make some terribly foolish blunder that would get into the papers and spoil all her chances of—of everything. I could never endure that. And she's never known anybody, I suppose, and has no standards; and with so much money, she might fall the prey of some—some fortune-hunter. Particularly since she wants to

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In the theatre lounge she had a chance to do a good deal of observation between the acts.

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The Peace of Versailles

By J. M. Keynes

Author of "The Economic Consequences of the Peace."

John Maynard Keynes, fellow of King's College, Cambridge, Editor of the *Economic Journal* since 1912, and a well-known British economist, was principal representative of the British Treasury at the Paris Peace Conference and Deputy for the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Supreme Economic Council of the Allies. His book, "The Economic Consequences of the Peace," was the sensation of the year both for its revelation of the character and personalities of the Peace Conference and for its scathing arraignment of the political and economic wisdom of the treaty.

Since it was published, many things have happened, and the treaty has become the battle-ground of world opinion as well as the sore spot of American politics and one of the leading issues of the coming presidential campaign.

We have asked Mr. Keynes to tell the American public directly what he thinks of the Treaty now, in the light of the present situation. He has done so in this masterly article which not only sums up the substance of his sensational book but makes some interesting comment on the political situation here.

In an early number we plan to present an article discussing from the point of view of France the adverse opinion of the Treaty which Mr. Keynes has elaborated in his book. The article is written by the eminent French statesman, Andre Tardieu, who as High Commissioner of France to the United States during the war, and as an active participant in the peace negotiations since, has labored to present the case of France in the fairest light to this country and to the world.

ABOUT six months have now passed by since I published a book entitled "The Economic Consequences of the Peace."* In this period the book has been published in the principal languages of the world,† and it has been reviewed in many hundreds of journals. The best and the worst have been said of me. But, at any rate, my facts and arguments have been open to the examination of expert critics everywhere; and my conclusions have had to justify themselves before the bar of the educated opinion of the whole world in a manner never required of the half-secret deliberations of Paris.

I am now invited to restate briefly the leading points of my contention and to add a few reflections which the course of events, since I wrote my book, may have suggested. But the space at my disposal is brief, and I must refer to the book itself those readers who are interested in the evidence and arguments in detail.

There are two separate aspects of the peace which we have imposed on the enemy—on the one hand its justice, on the other hand its wisdom and its expediency. I was mainly concerned with the second. But there were certain aspects of the first also with which I thought it my duty to deal carefully.

Its Justice

THE nature of the terms which we were entitled *in justice* to impose depends, in part, on the responsibility of the enemy nations for causing so tremendous a calamity as the late war, and in part on the understanding on which the enemy laid down his arms at the time of the armistice. In my own opinion, it is not possible to lay the entire responsibility for the state of affairs out of which the war arose on any single nation; it was engendered, in part at least, by the essential character of international politics and rivalries during the latter part of the nineteenth century, by militarism everywhere (certainly in Russia as well as in Germany and Austria-Hungary), and by the universally practised policies of economic imperialism; it had its seeds deep in the late history of Europe.

But I believe, nevertheless, that Germany bears a special and peculiar responsibility for the war itself, for its universal and devastating character, and for its final development into a combat without quarter for mastery or defeat. A criminal may be the outcome of his environment, but he is none the less a criminal.

The evidence which has become public in the past year has convinced me that, during the weeks preceding August, 1914, persons in power in Germany deliberately provoked the war and intended that it should commence when it did. If this be so, the accepted standards of international justice entitled us to impose, at Germany's expense, any terms which might be calculated to make good some part of the destruction done, to heal Europe's wounds, to preserve and perpetuate peace, and to terrify future malefactors.

Even so, however, it was our duty to look more to the future than to the past, to distinguish between the late rulers of Germany on the one hand and her common people and unborn posterity on the other, and to be sure that our acts were guided by magnanimity and wisdom more than by revenge or hatred. It was also proper for us to feel and practise some measure of humility at the conclusion of so terrible and extraordinary a struggle, and not to elevate ourselves and our Allies, in boastful and unseemly language, to a level of morality and of international disinterestedness which, whatever the faults of others, we can not claim. But above all, should not the future peace of the world have been our highest and guiding motive? Men of all nations had suffered together, the victims of a curse deep-seated in the past history and present weakness of the European race. The lifting of the curse was a better object in the treaty, if universal justice were our aim, than its relentless execution.

Its Honorableness

BUT there was another aspect of justice, more earthly perhaps than the high topics which have just occupied us—the question of our promises, in reliance on which the enemy had capitulated. Beginning with the invasion of Belgium, the Allied countries had pronounced the sacredness of engagements and the maintenance of international good faith as among their principal objects. Only thus, in the judgment of the considered wisdom of the world, only by the establishment of the rule of law as between nations, can national egotisms be tempered and the stability of settlements be preserved. It was therefore peculiarly incumbent upon us to practise what we had preached, and even to be so scrupulous as not to take advantage of an ambiguous phrase.

To understand the peace, therefore, and its effect on general confidence in the fairness of the Allies, we have to remember the history of the negotiations which began with the German note of October 5, 1918, and concluded with President Wilson's note of November 5, 1918.

On October 5, 1918, the German Government addressed a note to the President, accepting the Fourteen Points and asking for peace negotiations. The President's reply of October eighth asked if he was to understand definitely that the German Government accepted "the terms laid down" in the Fourteen Points and in his subsequent addresses and "that its object in entering into discussion would be only to agree upon the practical details of their application." He added that the evacuation of invaded territory must be a prior condition of an armistice.

* Published in the United States by Messrs. Harcourt, Brace & Howe.

† The various editions of the book now comprise about 100,000 copies.

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On October twelfth the German Government returned an unconditional affirmative to these questions—"its object in entering into discussions would be only to agree upon practical details of the application of these terms." After further correspondence the President announced on October twenty-third that, "having received the solemn and explicit assurance of the German Government that it unreservedly accepts the terms of peace laid down in his address to the Congress of the United States on January 8, 1918 (the Fourteen Points), and the principles of settlement enunciated in his subsequent addresses, particularly the address of September twenty-seventh, and that it is ready to discuss the details of their application," he has communicated the above correspondence to the governments of the Allied Powers "with the suggestion that, if these governments are disposed to effect peace upon the terms and principles indicated," they will ask their military advisers to draw up armistice terms of such a character as to "ensure to the associated governments the unrestricted power to safeguard and enforce the details of the peace to which the German Government has agreed."

On November 5, 1918, the President transmitted to Germany the reply he had received from the governments associated with him. In this reply the Allied Governments, "subject to the qualifications which follow, declare their willingness to make peace with the Government of Germany on the terms of peace laid down in the President's address to Congress of January 8, 1918, and the principles of settlement enunciated in his subsequent addresses." The qualifications in question were two in number. The first related to the freedom of the seas, as to which they "reserved to themselves complete freedom." The second related to reparation and extended the claim, beyond the devastated areas, to which in the Fourteen Points the President had confined himself, so as to cover also damage suffered by Allied civilians from submarines, air-raids and the like.

The Armistice Contract

THE nature of the contract between Germany and the Allies resulting from this exchange of documents is plain and unequivocal. The terms of the peace are to be in accordance with the addresses of the President, and the purpose of the Peace Conference is "to discuss the details of their application." The circumstances of the contract were of an unusually solemn and binding character; for one of the conditions of it was that Germany should agree to armistice terms which were to be such as would leave her helpless.

What, then, was the substance of this contract to which the Allies had bound themselves? I have examined this in detail in my book. In a word, we were committed to a peace based upon the Fourteen Points and upon the principle that "there shall be no annexations, no contributions, no punitive damages."

It is still maintained by some persons that the enemy surrendered unconditionally and that we are in no way bound by the engagements outlined above. This has been maintained lately, for example, in a lengthy article contributed to the New York *Times* by General Greene. Other advocates of the treaty stand upon the other leg and maintain that, while we are bound by the Fourteen Points, the peace treaty is in substantial conformity with them. This, I understand, is the attitude of President Wilson. I am reckoned a hostile critic of the President because I believe that he holds this attitude sincerely, having been partly deceived and partly self-deceived, his thought and feeling being here cast in what, for lack of a more descriptive phrase, I termed a theological mold. His friends argue, however, that he was well aware of what he was doing in Paris and deliberately sacrificed some part of his professions in the interests of the higher political expediency.

The Enigma of Wilson

THE extraordinary story of hopes, ideals, weaknesses, failures and disappointments, of which the President has been the leading figure and eponymous hero, will interest and perplex mankind as long as history is read and the hearts of the great ones are the subject of the curious exploration of the multitude. Was *Hamlet* mad or feigning? Was the President sick or cunning? On what a stage he played, and with what forfeits! Ruling the destinies of nations, now with the words of the philosopher and next with the realities of power; with the voices of heaven at one ear and the party managers at the other; proud and timorous; lofty and small; disinterested and ambitious; soaring to the rarest heights of terrestrial fortune, and there smitten by the blindness of Apollo and the plagues of Egypt.

If the President loves fame, let him be satisfied. Posterity remembers the mixed characters of history who have a star and it fails them. The Emperor William exhibits for us the fluctuations of fate. But he belongs to the satyric drama, a victim of the buffoonery of the gods, whose story may instruct but will not perplex us. For the President a grander niche is waiting, where he and his story will symbolize and illustrate some of the mingled and mysterious strains in our common nature.

Yet I, at any rate, though I have tried to express what I saw, and am not shaken in my opinions by the subsequent passage of events, would shrink from controversy with critics on so doubtful and perplexed an issue as the feelings and the motives of an individual. I have put on record in my analysis of the President the impression produced on a single observer, and I claim no more for it. I wrote in a moment of disappointment, but, to the best of my ability, in a spirit of greater historical objectivity than some of my critics have given me credit for. Events themselves have surely shown that he was not wise, and even that he was deluded. But I do not forget that he, alone among the statesmen of Paris, sought ideal aims, and sincerely pursued throughout the Conference the future peace of the world as his supreme and governing purpose. Even in the futile stubbornness of the past few months an element of nobility has been present. Samson, blind and shorn of his locks, spoke so:

PUBLIC OFFICER: Regard thyself, this will offend them highly.

SAMSON: Myself? My conscience and internal peace. Can they think me so broken, so debased with corporal servitude, that my mind ever will condescend to such absurd commands?

But there remains the question—greater than that of the actions and motives of individuals—whether in fact we have kept faith with our enemies. I have maintained that on certain matters we have not kept faith, the most important instance within the economic sphere, which was my particular subject-matter, being the inclusion in our reparation claims of huge sums for military pensions and separation allowances, which greatly swell the bill and to which we are not entitled. Our treatment of the Saar Valley, of tariffs and of Germany's river system afford other examples.

Let me here limit myself to the reparation claims. I venture to assert that my criticism of these claims has not been seriously controverted by any one. It has been stated, since my book appeared, that the President's own advisers in Paris informed him that these claims were illegitimate. Many critics have passed over in silence this particular issue. Yet if it is in fact the case that we have not kept our engagements, is it not a matter of some importance to the national honor of each one of the allied and associated countries, and to the moral government of the world?

Those who have defended the treaty on this issue have done so on the most extraordinary grounds. I select below some of the commoner lines of argument. Some say that Germany, if she had won, would not have kept faith with us, and that this fact absolves us from being overscrupulous with her; the enemy, being themselves unjust—this argument asserts—are not entitled to better treatment in return.

Others say that the information we now have makes it probable that Germany could have been compelled to surrender unconditionally, and that for this reason the President's *pourparlers* before the armistice lose much of their binding character.

Others point out that our engagements were in part vaguely expressed; that they were not cast in a legal form; that there is no one to enforce them; and that they can not therefore constitute a "contract." (Imagine, however, with what indignation these same apologists would explode before a similar argument on the lips of a German.)

Others, again, discover that the President was exceeding his powers in his preliminary negotiations as to the basis of the peace, in reliance on which the enemy laid down his arms; and that his promises consequently bound no one.

These are all of them types of man's eternal reasons for not keeping his promises, and their roots are in human nature. But they ill accord with the victorious issue of a crusade for the sanctity of international engagements.

The Treaty's Wisdom

WITH these brief comments I pass from the justice of the treaty, which can not be ignored even when it is not our central topic, to its wisdom and its expediency. Under these heads my criticism of the treaty is double. In the first place, this treaty ignores the economic solidarity of Europe, and by aiming at the destruction of the economic life of Germany it threatens the health and prosperity of the Allies themselves. In the second place, by making demands the execution of which is in the literal sense impossible, it stultifies itself and leaves Europe more unsettled than it found it. The treaty, by overstepping the limits

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of the possible, has in practise settled nothing. The true settlement still remains to be made out of the ashes of the present and the disillusionment of the future, when the imposture of Paris is recognized for what it is.

For reasons of historical experience, which are easily understood, and with which all men must sympathize (however profoundly we believe that France will deal to herself as well as to her enemy a fatal wound if she yields to them), there were powerful influences in Paris demanding for the future security of France that the peace should complete the destruction of the economic life of Central Europe, which the war had gone far to consummate.

The Shattered Heart of Europe

THE German economic system as it existed before the war depended on three main factors:

1. Overseas commerce, as represented by her mercantile marine, her colonies, her foreign investments, her exports, and the overseas connections of her merchants.
2. The exploitation of her coal and iron and the industries built upon them.
3. Her transport and tariff system.

Of these the first, while not the least important, was certainly the most vulnerable. The treaty aims at the systematic destruction of all three, but principally the first two.

Germany has ceded to the Allies all the vessels of her mercantile marine exceeding sixteen hundred tons gross, half the vessels between one thousand tons and sixteen hundred tons, and one-quarter of her trawlers and other fishing boats. The cession is comprehensive, including not only vessels flying the German flag, but also all vessels owned by Germans but flying other flags, and all vessels under construction as well as those afloat. Further, Germany undertakes, if required, to build for the Allies such types of ships as they may specify, up to two hundred thousand tons annually for five years, the value of these ships being credited to Germany against what is due from her for reparation. Thus the German mercantile marine is swept from the seas and can not be restored for many years to come on a scale adequate to meet the requirements of her own commerce.

Germany has ceded to the Allies "all her rights and titles over her overseas possessions." This cession not only applies to sovereignty but extends on unfavorable terms to government property, all of which, including railways, must be surrendered without payment. Further, in distinction from the practise ruling in the case of most similar cessions in recent history, the property and persons of private German nationals, as distinct from their Government, are also injuriously affected. Not only are German sovereignty and German influence extirpated from the whole of her former overseas possessions, but the persons and property of her nationals resident or owning property in those parts are deprived of legal status and legal security.

The provisions just outlined in regard to the private property of Germans in the ex-German colonies apply equally to private German property in Alsace-Lorraine, except in so far as the French Government may choose to grant exceptions.

The expropriation of German private property is not limited, however, to the ex-German colonies and Alsace-Lorraine. The cumulative effect of a series of complicated provisions, which I have examined in detail in my book, is to deprive Germany (or rather to empower the Allies so to deprive her at their will—it is not yet accomplished) of everything she possesses outside her own frontiers as laid down in the treaty. Not only are her overseas investments taken and her connections destroyed, but the same process of extirpation is applied in the territories of her former allies and of her immediate neighbors by land.

The above provisions relate to Germany's external wealth. Those relating to coal and iron are more important in respect of their ultimate consequences to Germany's internal industrial economy than for the money value immediately involved. The German Empire has been built more truly on coal and iron than on blood and iron. The skilled exploitation of the great coalfields of the Ruhr, Upper Silesia and the Saar alone made possible the development of the steel, chemical and electrical industries which established her as the first industrial nation of continental Europe. One-third of Germany's population lives in towns of more than twenty thousand inhabitants, an industrial concentration which is only possible on a foundation of coal and iron. In striking, therefore, at her coal supply, those who sought her economic destruction were not mistaking their target.

Coal

THE coal clauses of the treaty are, however, among those which are likely, by reason of the technical impossibility of their execution, to defeat their own object. If the plebiscite results in Germany's losing the coal districts of Upper Silesia, the treaty will have deprived her of territory from which not far short of one-third of her total coal supply was previously derived. Out of the coal that remains to her Germany is required, quite rightly, to make good for ten years the estimated loss which France has incurred by the destruction and damage of war in the coalfields of her northern provinces, such deliveries not to exceed twenty million tons in each of the first five years or eight million tons annually thereafter. She has also, over and above this, for ten years to deliver annually seven million tons to France, eight million tons to Belgium, and from four million five hundred thousand tons to eight million five hundred thousand tons to Italy.

I have estimated that this would leave Germany with about sixty million tons annually against domestic requirements, which, on the prewar basis of industry in her remaining territory, would amount to one hundred and ten million tons. In short, Germany could only execute the coal demands of the treaty by abandoning the bulk of her industries and returning to the status of an agricultural country. In this case many millions of her present population could obtain neither work nor food (nor, indeed, facilities of emigration). Yet it is not to be supposed that the population of any country will submit year after year to an export which dooms many of them to starvation and even to death. The thing is humanly and politically impossible. Men will not die so obediently to the dictates of a document. The coal clauses of the treaty are not being executed and never will be.

But in this event the treaty settles nothing, and the extent of the coal deliveries remains as a source of perpetual friction, uncertainty and inefficiency, which will inhibit the industrial activity of all the European countries alike which are parties to it. The coal will not be delivered; it may not even be mined. No plans which look ahead can be made by any one. The commodity will be the subject of a perpetual scramble; and even of military occupations and of bloodshed. For, as the result of many various causes, the coal position of all Europe is nearly desperate, and no country will lightly surrender its treaty rights. I affirm, therefore, that the coal clauses are inexpedient and disastrous, and full of danger not only for the economic efficiency but for the political peace of the European continent.

Iron

THE provisions relating to iron ore require less detailed attention, though their effects are destructive. They require less attention, because they are in large measure inevitable. Almost exactly seventy-five per cent. of the iron ore raised in Germany in 1913 came from Alsace-Lorraine. But while Lorraine contained seventy-five per cent. of Germany's iron-ore, only twenty-five per cent. of her blast-furnaces and of her foundries lay within Lorraine and the Saar basin together, a large proportion of the ore being carried into Germany proper. Thus here, as elsewhere, political considerations cut disastrously across economic.

In a régime of free trade and free economic intercourse it would be of little consequence that iron lay on one side of a political frontier and labor, coal and blast-furnaces on the other. But it seems certain, calculating on the present passions and impulses of European capitalistic society, that the effective iron output of Europe will be diminished by a new political frontier (which sentiment and historic justice require), because nationalism and private interest are thus allowed to impose a new economic frontier along the same lines. These latter considerations are allowed, in the present governance of Europe, to prevail over the intense need of the continent for the most sustained and efficient production to repair the destruction of war and to satisfy the insistence of labor for a larger reward.

Thus in its coal and iron clauses the treaty strikes at organization, and by the destruction of organization impairs yet further the reduced wealth of the whole community.

There remain those treaty provisions which relate to the transport and the tariff systems of Germany. These parts of the treaty have not nearly the importance and significance of those discussed hitherto. They are pin-pricks, interferences and vexations, not so much objectionable for their solid consequences as dishonorable to the Allies in the light of their professions. I can not spare space in this brief article to consider them in the detail they deserve. Taken in their entirety, the economic clauses of the treaty are comprehensive, and little has been overlooked which might impoverish Germany now or obstruct her development in future. So situated, Germany is to make payments of money, on a

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scale and in a manner about to be examined.

The treaty's claims for an indemnity may be divided into two parts: those which, in accordance with our pre-armistice engagements, we were entitled to make if we judged it expedient to do so, and those which, in my judgment, we had no right to make. The first category includes as its chief items all the direct damages to civilian life and property for which Germany was responsible, more particularly in the invaded and occupied areas of France, Belgium and Serbia, by air-raids, and by the warfare of submarines. It includes also compensation for the improper treatment of interned civilians and for the loot of food, raw materials, live stock, machinery, household effects, timber and the like; and the repayment of fines and requisitions levied on the towns of France and Belgium. I have ventured as a very rough estimate to calculate the total of these items at the following figures:

Belgium	$2,500,000,000*
France	4,000,000,000
Great Britain	2,850,000,000
Other Allies	1,250,000,000
	$10,600,000,000

I need not impress on the reader that there is much guesswork in the above, and the figure for France in particular has been criticised on the ground that it is too low.

But I feel some confidence that the general magnitude, as distinct from the precise figures, is not very erroneous; and this may be expressed by the statement that a claim against Germany, based on the interpretation of the pre-armistice engagements of the Allied Powers which is adopted above, would assuredly be found to exceed eight billion and to fall short of fifteen billion.

Indemnity Demands

THIS is the amount of the claim which we were entitled to present to the enemy. I believe that it would have been a wise and just act to have asked the German Government at the peace negotiations to agree to a sum of ten billion in final settlement, without further examination of particulars. This would have provided an immediate and certain solution, and would have required from Germany a sum which, if she were granted certain indulgences, it might not have proved entirely impossible for her to pay. This sum should have been divided up among the Allies themselves on a basis of need and general equity.

But the question was not settled on its merits, and the above figure is far from representing the whole of our actual claims under the treaty. As a compromise between keeping the letter of our engagements and demanding the entire cost of the war, which French and British politicians had promised to their constituents from the platform, Paris decided to include a claim, which seemed plausible in itself, which recommended itself to sentiment, and which amounted to a large sum; and Germany has been required to discharge in their entirety all military pensions and separation allowances paid or to be paid, which have arisen out of the war. I have estimated that this adds to the bill an aggregate sum of twenty-five billion dollars made up as follows:

France	$12,000,000,000
British Empire	7,000,000,000
Italy	2,500,000,000
Others (including the United States)	3,500,000,000
	$25,000,000,000

Adding this figure to my maximum estimate of fifteen billion dollars, we have a total claim against Germany of about forty billion dollars. While the details making up this total have been criticised and much higher figures have been mentioned (as, for example, seventy-five billion dollars by M. Klotz, then finance minister of France), the world has, generally speaking, accepted my figure as representing the facts as nearly as is at present possible, and as supplying a reasonable basis of discussion.

The Blank Check

THE reader will observe that this figure is mine, and that no final amount is specified by the treaty itself, which fixes no definite sum as representing Germany's liability. This feature has been the subject of very general criticism, that it is equally inconvenient to Germany and to the Allies themselves that she should not know what she has to pay or they what they are to receive. The method, apparently contemplated by the treaty, of arriving at the final result over a period of many months by an addition of hundreds of thousands of individual claims for damage to land, farm buildings and chickens, is evidently impracticable, and the reasonable course would have been for both parties to compound for a round sum without examination of details. If this round sum had been named in the treaty, the settlement would have been placed on a more businesslike basis.

But this was impossible for two reasons. Two different kinds of false statements had been widely promulgated, one as to Germany's capacity to pay, the other as to the amount of the Allies' just claims in respect of the devastated areas. The fixing of either of these figures presented a dilemma. A figure for Germany's prospective capacity to pay, not too much in excess of the estimates of most candid and well-informed authorities, would have fallen hopelessly far short of popular expectations both in England and in France. On the other hand, a definite figure for damage done which would not disastrously disappoint the expectations that had been raised in France and Belgium might have been incapable of substantiation under challenge.

By far the safest course for the politicians was, therefore, to mention no figure at all; and from this necessity a great deal of the complication of the reparation scheme essentially springs.

According to the letter of the treaty, any part of the sum eventually determined as due which remains unpaid from time to time is to accumulate at interest at five per cent., while the earlier instalments of payment are contemplated as follows: Up to May 1, 1921, Germany is to make lump-sum payments, in cash, kind and bearer bonds, so as to bring the net sum available for reparation to fifteen billion dollars. These bearer bonds carry interest at two and one-half per cent. per annum from 1921 to 1925, and at five per cent. plus one per cent. for amortization thereafter. Assuming, therefore, that Germany is not able to provide any appreciable surplus toward reparation before 1921, she will have to find a sum of three hundred and seventy-five million dollars annually from 1921 to 1925, and nine hundred million dollars annually thereafter.

As soon as the Reparation Commission is satisfied that Germany can do better than this, five per cent. bearer bonds are to be issued for a further ten billion dollars, the rate of amortization being determined by the commission hereafter. This would bring the annual payment to one billion four hundred million dollars without allowing anything for the discharge of the capital of the last ten billion dollars.

Germany's liability, however, is not limited to twenty-five billion dollars, and the Reparation Commission is to demand further instalments of bearer bonds until the total enemy liability has been provided for. On the basis of my estimate of forty billion dollars for the total liability, this balance will be fifteen billion dollars. Assuming interest at five per cent., this will raise the annual payment to two billion one hundred and fifty million dollars without allowance for amortization.

But even this is not all. There is a further provision of devastating significance. Bonds representing payments in excess of fifteen billion dollars are not to be issued until the commission is satisfied that Germany can meet the interest on them. But this does not mean that interest is remitted in the meantime. As from May 1, 1921, the capital sum of indebtedness is rolling up all the time at compound interest. The effect of this provision toward increasing the burden is enormous, on the assumption that Germany can not pay very large sums at first.

At five per cent. compound interest a capital sum doubles itself in fifteen years. On the assumption that Germany can not pay more than seven hundred and fifty million dollars annually until 1936 (*i.e.*, five per cent. interest on fifteen billion dollars) the twenty-five billion dollars on which interest is deferred will have risen to fifty billion dollars, carrying an annual interest charge of two billion five hundred million dollars.

An Avalanche of Debt

THAT is to say, even if Germany pays seven hundred and fifty million dollars annually up to 1936, she will nevertheless owe us at that date more than half as much again as she does now (sixty-five billion dollars as compared with forty billion dollars). From 1936 onward she will have to pay to us three billion two hundred and fifty million dollars annually in order to keep pace with the interest alone. At the end of any year in which she pays less than this sum she will owe more than she did at the beginning of it. And if she is to discharge the capital sum in thirty years from 1936, *i. e.*, in forty-eight years from the armistice, she must pay an additional six hundred and fifty million dollars annually, making three billion nine hundred million dollars in all.

It is, in my judgment, as certain as anything can be, for reasons which I will summarize in a moment, that Germany can not pay anything approaching this sum. Until the treaty is altered, therefore, Germany has in effect engaged herself to hand over to

* Assuming that in the case of Belgium, the peculiar claims of which the Germans have freely recognized, a sum of $1,250,000,000 is included for the general costs of the war.

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the Allies the whole of her surplus production in perpetuity.

This is not less the case because the Reparation Commission has been given discretionary powers to vary the rate of interest, and to postpone and even to cancel the capital indebtedness. In the first place, some of these powers can only be exercised if the commission or the governments represented on it are *unanimous*. But also, which is perhaps more important, it will be the *duty* of the Reparation Commission, until there has been a unanimous and far-reaching change of the policy which the treaty represents, to extract from Germany year after year the maximum sum obtainable. There is a great difference between fixing a definite sum, which, though large, is within Germany's capacity to pay and yet to retain a little for herself, and fixing a sum far beyond her capacity, which is then to be reduced at the discretion of a foreign commission, acting with the object of obtaining each year the maximum which the circumstances of that year permit. For the first still leaves her with some slight incentive for enterprise, energy and hope.

Germany's Capacity to Pay

HOW is Germany placed, in the situation in which the rest of the treaty leaves her, for discharging a vast obligation?

It is evident that Germany's pre-war capacity to pay an annual foreign tribute has not been unaffected by the almost total loss of her colonies, her overseas connections, her mercantile marine, and her foreign properties; by the cession of ten per cent. of her territory and population, of one-third of her coal and of three-quarters of her iron ore; by two million casualties among men in the prime of life; by the starvation of her people for four years; by the burden of a vast war debt; by the depreciation of her currency to less than one-seventh its former value; by the disruption of her allies and their territories; by revolution at home and Bolshevism on her borders; and by all the unmeasured ruin in strength and hope of four years of all-swallowing war and final defeat.

All this, one would have supposed, is evident. Yet most estimates of a great indemnity from Germany depend on the assumption that she is in a position to conduct in the future a vastly greater trade than ever she has had in the past.

The forms in which Germany can discharge her debt are three and three only: (1) immediately transferable wealth in the form of gold, ships and foreign securities; (2) the value of property in ceded territory or surrendered under the armistice; and (3) annual payments spread over a term of years, partly in cash and partly in materials such as coal products, potash and dyes. There is no other way whatever.

In my book I have analyzed in detail the value of the items under the first two heads. What has occurred since I made my estimate has tended to the conclusion that this estimate is too high rather than too low; nor have my figures been seriously challenged by any one. The general conclusion of this examination of the available data is that a sum of from five hundred million dollars to one billion dollars is the utmost that can be available after payment of the costs of the armies of occupation.

It will perhaps assist the reader to visualize how trifling the tangible and transferable wealth of Germany is, in relation to the fantastic magnitudes mentioned above, if I select one important special item. The total value of the German mercantile marine, which under the treaty the Allies are to obtain for themselves, is probably overstated at six hundred million dollars—six hundred million dollars toward a total liability of forty billion dollars. The vast expenditures of the war, the inflation of prices, and the depreciation of currency, leading up to a complete instability of the unit of value, joined to the fact that what we believed to be the limits of possibility have been so enormously exceeded and those who founded their expectations on the past have been so often wrong, have made the man in the street lose all sense of number and magnitude in matters of finance. But we must endeavor to regain our sense of proportion.

If the amount of Germany's immediately transferable property is unimportant, it follows that the Reparation Commission must mainly depend on future annual payments. There is literally only one way in which such payments can be made (apart from temporary loans to Germany by foreign countries), namely, by the exports of Germany exceeding her imports. It follows, therefore, that a rational estimate of the possibilities of the case can only be made on the basis of the examination of the trade figures of Germany before the war and of the possible expansion of the export items.

It is not possible within the limits of the space here at my disposal to enter into the details of this examination. But my broad conclusion is that in the actual facts of the case there is no reasonable probability of Germany's being able to make payments in excess of five hundred million dollars annually. This figure has not been challenged in detail by any one, and has been supported, as being in the neighborhood of the best estimate, by many distinguished authorities.

Her Export Powers

A FEW leading facts may be summarized. The staple exports of Germany are:

(1) Iron and steel goods; (2) machinery; (3) coal, coke and briquettes; (4) woolen goods; (5) cotton goods; these five classes between them accounting before the war for nearly forty per cent. of the total exports. As regards two of the categories, namely, cotton and woolen goods, the increase of an export trade is dependent upon an increase of the import of the raw material, since Germany produces no cotton and practically no wool. These trades are therefore incapable of great expansion unless Germany is given facilities for securing these raw materials (which can only be at the expense of the Allies) in excess of the pre-war standard of consumption, and even then the effective increase is not the gross value of the exports, but only the difference between the value of the manufactured exports and of the imported raw material.

As regards the other three categories—namely, machinery, iron goods and coal—Germany's capacity to increase her exports will have been taken from her by the cessions of territory in Poland, Upper Silesia and Alsace-Lorraine. As has been pointed out already, these districts accounted for nearly one-third of Germany's production of coal. But they also supplied no less than three-quarters of her iron-ore production and thirty-eight per cent. of her blast-furnaces. Unless, therefore, Alsace-Lorraine and Upper Silesia send their iron ore to Germany proper, to be worked up—which will involve an increase in the imports for which she will have to find payment—so far from any increase in export trade being possible, a decrease is inevitable.

Yet an enormously increased export is necessary. For, so far from Germany's exports exceeding her imports before the war, her imports exceeded her exports on the average of the five years ending 1913 by about three hundred and seventy million dollars. On the assumptions, therefore, (1) that we do not specially favor Germany over ourselves in supplies of such raw materials as cotton and wool (the world's supply of which is limited); (2) that France, having secured the iron-ore deposits, makes a serious attempt to secure the blast-furnaces and the steel trade also; (3) that Germany is not encouraged and assisted to undercut the iron and other trades of the Allies in overseas markets; and (4) that a substantial preference is not given to German goods in the British Empire and other Allied countries, it becomes evident by examination of the specific items that not much is practicable.

I reach, therefore, the final conclusion that, including all methods of payment—immediately transferable wealth, ceded property and an annual tribute—ten billion dollars is a safe maximum figure of Germany's capacity to pay. In all the actual circumstances, I do not believe that she can pay as much.

A capacity of forty billion dollars or even of twenty-five billion dollars is, therefore, not within the limits of reasonable possibility. It is for those who believe that Germany can make an annual payment amounting to thousands of millions of dollars to say *in what specific commodities* they intend this payment to be made, and *in what markets* the goods are to be sold. Until they proceed to some degree of detail, and are able to produce some tangible argument in favor of their conclusions, they do not deserve to be believed.

A Dead Treaty

SUCH, in brief, are the economic provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, which the United States has refused to ratify and most of Europe would now unwrite if it could. A year has passed since it came into existence, and authority has already passed from it—not, in my judgment, because there has been much softening of sentiment toward Germany, but because the treaty is no treaty, because it is now generally recognized that in truth it settles nothing. After what has passed, Europe requires above all a *settlement*, and this the treaty has not given it. If you pledge a man to perform the impossible, you are no nearer a decision as to what in fact he is to do; for his pledge is, necessarily, a dead letter. The reparation and coal clauses of the treaty are its most important economic features. But being composed of foolish, idle words, having no relation to the real facts, they are without practical effect, and they leave the prospects of the future undetermined.

What, then, are we to do? Before I venture an answer, there is one element in the attitude of the United States to the treaty which deserves attention The

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United States has refused to ratify the treaty; the United States gets nothing out of the treaty; the ideals of the vast majority of the inhabitants of the United States are probably at variance with the treaty; even at Paris it was the representatives of the United States who fought most sincerely and resolutely for the modification of the treaty—yet it is in the United States that the treaty now finds its most whole-hearted defenders.

The Situation Here

THE explanation of the paradox is to be found, I think, in this: in England the treaty was swallowed in the first instance without much criticism or comment; it has never become in any intense degree a party question; Mr. Lloyd George himself now appears among those most willing to modify it; and consequently there is no vested interest in defending it. But in the United States the treaty has become a bitter party question. The President, in a spirit, as I believe, of sincere delusion, or, as his friends maintain, of calculated wisdom, has maneuvered himself or been maneuvered into the position of defending the integral acceptance of the document. The personal adherents of the President must follow his single track. An American professor or an American lawyer back from the Conference writes about the treaty in newspapers articles of hot eulogy, such as are not common in Europe. My own American colleagues from Paris, whose views I so much shared and whose labors against the treaty I so much admired, now, alas! find themselves committed by loyalty to an honored chief to representing the treaty, what no one in Europe now thinks it, as an instrument of substantial wisdom. Truly the President carries his own cross, doomed by a perverse fate to support a settlement which has at the same time shattered his prestige and defeated his ideals.

It will therefore be difficult, I fear—though I speak at a distance and without knowledge—so long as the treaty remains a party issue, for the United States to approach its great problems in the impartial and disinterested spirit which their special position makes possible and will, I believe, eventually make actual.

Remedies

FROM this necessary digression I return to the question of the policy of the immediate future. For my own part I hold with increasing conviction that the revision of the treaty is the necessary and inevitable first step forward. In the book which I wrote nearly a year ago I proposed various other remedies, including an international loan and the cancellation of war debt between Allies. I believe that these, perhaps utopian, plans were of value a year ago; they may be of value again a year or two hence, though by that time the circumstances of the day may demand a different solution in detail if not in spirit. But I concede that at this moment of time the attitude of the United States and the actual condition of Europe have combined to render them impracticable. Until by the revision of the treaty we are furnished with a sound foundation on which to build, the best laid schemes will fail.

Let me add that I differ profoundly from those who, admitting the imperfections of the treaty, look for succor to the provisions contained in it for its progressive modification in practise by the unanimous consent of the leading Allies. The difference between revising the treaty at once and progressively modifying it under the force of circumstances is the difference between building a firm foundation and underpinning day by day a tottering structure.

The Future

THIS revision is bound, as matters now are, to be primarily the affair of Europe. But it will be a disaster for the world if America isolates herself. I do not regret that the Congress of the United States has repudiated the treaty of Paris. But I pray that out of the ashes of this treaty and out of the embryonic shapes of the present League of Nations a new settlement and a new League may even now arise which will command the allegiance of all men.

The current of time seems to move slowly sometimes to the passengers upon its surface. In the interval, perhaps a short one, which must now elapse, I hope that we, the various peoples of the world, may abstain from vulgar and unmerciful words. It has been said that individuals everywhere are lovable and all nations detestble. There are very few nations at this time against which an accuser could not draw a just and injurious indictment. But Burke spoke deeply when he declared that he did not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people. "I really think," he added, "that for wise men this is not judicious, for sober men not decent, for minds tinctured with humanity not mild and merciful."

IN ADDITION to liberal instalments of the two serial novels beginning in this issue, the October number of EVERYBODY'S will contain seven complete short stories, among them:

"THE PROUD PIECE"—by Charles Saxby. She was proud and disdainful, a spoiled young heiress accustomed to having her own way. He was a devil-may-care roamer with a blithe disregard for power and place, a ready tongue, and an irritating air of mastery. Fate brought them together under circumstances that make delightful reading.

"THE DANCE OF THE CLAY-FOOTED"—by William H. Hamby. An itinerant tent show comes to town at a time when a crisis is imminent in the affairs of the local newspaper. The carnival boasts a marvelous lady fortune-teller and the newspaper a resourceful editor. Between them some eventful history is made.

"SEALED PROPOSALS"—by Thomas Addison. Another business story about our old friend Twenty-Per-Cent. Potter, twentieth-century merchant. This time his little board of strategists makes a bid for a police uniform contract and fights a ring of grafters.

"BOUND TO THE WESTWARD"—by Ralph D. Paine. A sea story in which money, pride and revenge are the stakes in a transoceanic race between two six-masted schooners. An Airedale mascot plays an important rôle, and there is a generous skipper who surrenders one prize to win another.

"THE LALLAPALOOSA"—by Wilbur S. Boyer. Irresistible as ever, Johnnie Kelly, the public-school incorrigible, discovers that wonder of wonders, a teacher who is a "peacherino" and "a regular feller." The fun begins when Johnnie becomes an aggresive advocate of school hygiene.

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Drawn by Holgate

The alleged criminal's head had dropped downward until it touched the table, for he was sound asleep.

A Jury *of* His Peers

By Ellis Parker Butler

Author of "Pigs is Pigs."

Ellis Parker Butler, thank goodness, has the hobby of writing mostly about all sorts of common little things—like pigs and garden hoses and the like—that we are all quite familiar with but never usually get sufficiently romantic about. This time it's a back porch, a milk-bottle, an innocent little rascal, some doughnuts, all the kids of the neighborhood and a conscientious father. For those interested in these things, and in domestic justice, it serves to show what a darn fool a wise dad can be—Or maybe he wasn't?

SATURDAY was a legal holiday and, of course, Sunday was Sunday, so when William Bradley, Senior, came home from New York on Friday evening it was with a feeling that he had vast leisure before him, and every reason to believe the leisure would be abundantly happy; but almost the first thing his wife said was:

"William, I don't know what to do! I'm afraid Billy Brad has been a bad, bad boy again!"

Billy Brad, standing beside his mother, ready to be picked up and kissed by William Bradley, Senior, looked at his father with anxious blue eyes.

"And—and I wasn't a bad boy," he said eagerly. "And—and I was a good boy. And—and maybe the old milk-bottle just upsetted itself, it did!"

"You see!" said Mrs. Bradley. "That's all I can get him to say. I've told him and *told* him not to touch the milk-bottles, and that I would have you spank him if he ever broke another one of them, and now——"

"Did it have milk in it?" asked William Bradley, Senior.

"It—it was a empty bottle," said Billy Brad as eagerly as before. "It was on the back po-urch, it was. For because my mama she putted it there. And—and my mama said, 'Don't you fall off the back po-urch, you bad old milk-bottle, you!' And—and——"

"There!" said Mrs. Bradley. "That is just what I have had to listen to all afternoon. I *can't* get him to say he broke it. I can't get him to say he didn't. It is just maddening, William! I never knew such a child in my life. If he would only admit that he disobeyed me, and broke the milk-bottle——"

"He would be sure of the spanking, hey?" said William Bradley, Senior, with a slight smile. "And if he declared he did not break it——"

"But that's nonsense," said Mrs. Bradley. "If he did not break it, who did?"

"Exactly!" said Mr. Bradley. "If he admits he broke it, he gets spanked for disobeying us and for breaking it, and if he says he did not break it, he gets spanked for telling an untruth, because you know he did break it. It seems to me that he is in for a spanking either way. If you know he broke the bottle, what is the use of asking him about it?"

"Well—" said Mrs. Bradley hesitatingly.

"You know how boys are," said Mr. Bradley cheerfully. "I know how I was, anyway. Not being entirely idiotic or subnormal I had an instinct of self-preservation born in me. Really, dear, if I knew Billy Brad had done a thing I wouldn't ask him if he had done it. In a way it is like asking him to tell an untruth in order to save himself. If you know he broke the bottle——"

"But that is just what I *don't* know," said Mrs. Bradley. "Or I do know, but I did not see him do it. No one could have broken it but Billy Brad. So it must have been Billy Brad."

"Maybe—maybe a big, old horse comed up on the po-urch," said Billy Brad hopefully, "and—and a big—old neffelunt, and—and——"

"You see," said Mr. Bradley to his wife, ignoring Billy Brad, "you *don't know* that Billy Brad broke the milk-bottle. That's the trouble. That is the weak spot."

"And—and—" said Billy Brad, "and maybe the big, old horse and the big, old neffelunt fighted on the po-urch. And—and maybe the big, old horse kickted out at the big, old neffelunt, and—and misted it, and—and kickted my poor mama's milk-bottle all to pieces!"

"You be still, Billy Brad," said his father. "You want to remember that anything you say may be used against you."

"But—but maybe the big, old horse didn't not kickted the bottle over," said Billy Brad, "for because maybe the big, old neffelunt swanged its trunk and knockted it over."

"Now, you stop!" said his father. "Don't say another word. What I want is my dinner, and I'll take this all up later."

Before dinner was over the alleged criminal's head dropped downward until it touched the table, and his fork fell with

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a clatter to the floor, for he was sound asleep.

"I don't wonder," said his mother. "He did play so hard to-day! There was not a minute that he was not going as hard as he could go. Don't waken him, William, and I will put him to bed as soon as we are through."

SO THERE was no spanking that night. Later in the evening William Bradley, Senior, sitting by the table in the living-room, put down his paper.

"About this milk-bottle episode," he asked, frowning slightly; "what am I to do? Of course he ought to be punished if you told him to keep away from the bottles and he disobeyed you and broke one. Did he break one?"

"William," said Mrs. Bradley, "I'm sure he broke one! Who else could have broken it?"

"A horse," said Mr. Bradley, smiling. "Or a big, old neffelunt. What makes you so sure Billy Brad broke it?"

"Well," said Mrs. Bradley, "Billy Brad broke them the other time, deliberately broke them to hear them crash. And Arthur would not break them; he is such a good little boy. He is so quiet and well-behaved. And Billy Brad was cutting up—acting smart, you know. He had one of those smarty spells of his. I could hear him, even if I could not see him. You know, William, how he does—'Oo! oo! oo! I'm a kangaroo hoppety-hopping!'—just to make some one laugh. He was doing it all afternoon, and you know how restless he gets when he is that way. He would think nothing of kicking a milk-bottle off the porch——"

"Now, hold on!" said Mr. Bradley. "Wait a minute! You don't want me to go up-stairs now, and waken Billy Brad and spank him, do you?"

"Mercy, no!" exclaimed Mrs. Bradley. "After he is asleep? I wouldn't think of having his night's rest broken——"

"But if he is guilty?" said Mr. Bradley. "They waken criminals to hang them. It is not half as bad to be awakened to be spanked. What does a sleep amount to, anyway? He can go to sleep again after—after the event."

"William," said Mrs. Bradley firmly, and in a tone that meant she was in earnest, "I will not have that child wakened to-night to be spanked!"

"That's right!" said Mr. Bradley approvingly. "I'm with you there. But it does show, doesn't it, that this spanking business is just a little too handy? That we may get to use it too often, just because it *is* such a handy, easily used weapon? We will spank the boy because he is handy, and I am handy, and the occasion is handy, but we won't do it if it is at all unhandy. We won't wake the boy to use the spank to impress upon him the fact that laws that are made must not be broken; we'll just spank him when it is convenient for all concerned—spank him because it is the handiest way to get the business over and done with."

"Well, you know, William," said Mrs. Bradley, "that it is almost impossible to argue with Billy Brad."

"You mean it is almost impossible to prevent him from arguing," smiled Mr. Bradley. "I'll admit that. It is difficult to use moral suasion on him when he refuses to be convinced that he guiltily, and with malice aforethought, broke a milk-bottle, and when he insists in pretending to believe that a horse or an elephant may have done the damage. That's the trouble, Mary; that's the weak spot. You see," continued William Bradley, Senior, who was enjoying this immensely, as most men do enjoy a thoroughly logical demonstration when they think their wives are on the wrong side, "the trouble is that you are not quite sure of the stand you have taken. You are not quite sure Billy Brad is guilty."

"Why, the idea!" exclaimed Mrs. Bradley indignantly.

"No," insisted Mr. Bradley, "you are not. Your testimony would not hold for a moment in a court of law. You did not see Billy Brad break the milk-bottle, and you did not hear him break it——"

"I heard him playing smarty in the back yard," said Mrs. Bradley.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Bradley, "I myself played smarty many times in my early boyhood, but I never broke a milk-bottle."

"They did not use milk-bottles in those days," said Mrs. Bradley; "I know that *we* always got our milk in a tin pail from a neighbor."

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Bradley again. "You beg the question! But playing smarty is not evidence of broken-milk-bottle guilt. And you did not see the breaking being done. And you admit there was another boy in the yard—this Arthur boy."

"He would not break milk-bottles," said Mrs. Bradley; "Billy Brad has broken them before."

"And I whipped him for it, poor little tike," said Mr. Bradley. "You would claim that because he was a criminal once he would always be a criminal."

"The idea!" exclaimed Mrs. Bradley. "I don't call him a criminal at all! Every boy breaks——"

"While I," said Mr. Bradley, "would claim that, because he was punished for breaking milk-bottles once, he would be most unlikely to break them again. In fact, Mary, it looks to me as if we were trying to convict and punish him on the most impossibly unsupported circumstantial evidence."

Mrs. Bradley, who had been sewing, bit her thread in two, and spread the garment on her lap, smoothing it and looking at it critically, with her head slightly cocked to one side.

"I wish I had used white instead of blue for this collar," she said, and then, "Well, if Billy Brad did not break that bottle, who did?"

"Others have been suggested," said Mr. Bradley.

"Others? Who?"

"A big, old horse and a big, old neffelunt," said Mr. Bradley.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Bradley, with a little laugh. "I thought you meant Arthur. Arthur is such a dear, sweet child——"

"If it comes to sweetness," said Mr. Bradley, "there are also flies on Billy Brad."

IN WESTCOTE, where water is worth its weight in gold—probably because so many clerks and inspectors have to be given rewards for getting out the vote on Election Day—and where a citizen has to have a permit if he wishes to sprinkle his few feet of lawn, a man with a garden hose in his hand is an attraction second only to an organ man with a monkey, and at three o'clock Saturday afternoon, when Mr. Bradley shut off the stream and coiled up the hose, at least fourteen of the neighborhood children cried: "Oh, Mr. Bradley, please don't stop yet!" But Mr. Bradley did coil the hose.

He rolled down his shirt-sleeves, and seated himself on the porch steps near where Mrs. Bradley rocked gently and sewed.

"Except when they lynch them," he said, "even criminals caught in the act are given a trial."

"My goodness!" said Mrs. Bradley. "Are you still thinking of that milk-bottle?"

"I am," said Mr. Bradley.

"I thought you talked that all out last night," said his wife.

"I've been thinking about it since," said Mr. Bradley. "You may be right. Billy Brad may have broken that bottle, and if he did, he ought to be punished. I want to be fair to him, both ways. I don't want him to think he can play cats and dogs with the laws we make, and I don't want to punish him unjustly for what he did not do, if he did not do it. Now, there's one thing every human being is entitled to, I believe."

"What?" asked Mrs. Bradley.

"A fair and impartial trial by a jury of his peers."

"Well, if you want me to call him in while we ask him——"

"No," said William Bradley, Senior. "We are not his peers. We are his superiors—mentally and physically. 'Peers' mean equals; children such as he is. What I propose——"

"William Bradley, you don't mean to let those children decide whether Billy Brad is to be punished or not?" cried Mrs. Bradley.

"Why, certainly!" said Mr. Bradely. "You'll be surprised, my dear. They are children, as he is; they are bright and clear-minded and know the childish mind and heart. You will be surprised. Have you any doughnuts?"

"Yes, but——"

MR. BRADLEY stood up and clapped his hands. "Mrs. Bradley has some doughnuts," he announced loudly, "and she is going to give you each one."

"I—I want two doughnuts," said Billy Brad. "And—and I can have two doughnuts, I can, because my mama she maded them, she did."

"Be still, Billy Brad," said his father; "this is a very serious matter for you. Now listen, all you kids! Which of you is Arthur?"

"I is," said the small boy in the pink waist.

"Well, you get a doughnut, too," said Mr. Bradley, "and I get a doughnut, and we all get doughnuts, but first I want you to sit on the steps here, and listen and then tell me something."

"Oh, goody!" said one of the Gleason twins. "It's like a game! I like games."

"Yes," said Mr. Bradley, "it is a game. It is a sort of 'find out' game. It is a game called Judge and Jury, if you like, but it is a very real game, because if you say one thing Billy Brad here will be spanked, and if you say the other thing he will not be spanked."

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"What do we have to say if we want him to be spanked, Mr. Bradley?" asked the Gleason twin.

"Guilty," said Mr. Bradley.

"Guilty—guilty—guilty," repeated the twin, trying to memorize it. "I want him to be spanked, don't you, Dorothy? Guilty! You say it too."

"Guilty," said the other Gleason twin.

"Dilty," said the little cherub-faced Graydon child.

"No, he's not guilty yet," said Mr. Bradley. "You don't know yet whether he is guilty or not. That is what you are here to decide after you hear the evidence—after you hear what everybody has to say. Sit here on the steps."

"I—I know what I are going to say," said Billy Brad. "I are not going to say guilty."

"You are going to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," said Mr. Bradley, as the children snuggled themselves on the steps.

"Are I?" asked Billy Brad innocently. "Why are I, Papa?"

"Because you are," said Mr. Bradley briefly, and clapped his hands for attention. "Now you," he added, waving his hand toward those on the steps, "are the jury, and I'll tell you what this is all about. Yesterday afternoon Mrs. Bradley left an empty milk-bottle on the back porch, and later in the day she found it at the bottom of the back porch steps, on the brick walk, broken."

"And—and maybe a big, old horse—" said Billy Brad.

"Be quiet, Billy Brad," said his father sternly, and continued his address to the jury. "Now, once before this Billy Brad broke a milk-bottle on purpose, and was punished for it, and he was told that if he broke another milk-bottle he would be punished again. What the jury has to decide is whether he did break the milk-bottle yesterday or did not break it. If he broke it, he will be punished, as he ought to be."

FROM the second step Gladys Gleason flapped her hand in the air, as when attracting teacher's attention in school.

"What is it?" asked Mr. Bradley.

"Guilty," said Gladys. "He's guilty, Mr. Bradley. Can we see you spank him? Me and Dorothy say he's guilty."

"Dilty," chirped the Graydon cherub cheerfully, waving her little pink hand.

"No, he's not guilty yet," said Mr. Bradley. "You don't know whether he is or is not."

"Why, Mr. Bradley!" cried Dorothy Gleason. "You *said* he was! You said—anyway, I—anyway——"

"I have not said Billy Brad broke the milk-bottle," Mr. Bradley said firmly and clearly. "I am not going to say it. It does not matter what I think about it. You have to decide whether he did or did not break it, after you hear all about it. And first, you are going to hear the things that may make you think he did break the bottle. Then you are going to hear the things that may make you think he did not break the bottle. And you will then decide whether he did or did not break it. Mary, will you take the chair first?"

"William, I think this is absolutely foolish!" said Mrs. Bradley, but she came down the steps and seated herself on the garden bench. Mr. Bradley faced her.

"You are the mother of William Bradley, Junior, who is accused of breaking a milk-bottle? This is he?"

"Yes."

"You live in this house? Do your own housework at present? Some time yesterday you put an empty milk-bottle on the back porch?"

"Yes."

"It was there after luncheon?"

"I put it out there after luncheon, about two o'clock. I set it near the steps, but behind the railing, so it would be out of the way."

"An ordinary one-quart milk-bottle?"

"Yes."

"When and in what condition did you see it next?"

"I saw it next about dinner-time, William, just before you came home. It was on the bricks at the bottom of the steps, broken all to pieces."

"You did not see any one break it?"

"No."

"Did you hear it break?"

"No."

"Where were you?"

"I was in different rooms, in the house."

"But you heard Billy Brad in the back yard?"

"Yes, I heard him playing there. He was playing with Arthur Frame, and he was very noisy. Billy Brad had one of his smarty spells—I could tell by the tone of his voice and the way Arthur was laughing—and seemed to be cutting up, one way and another. Just the way, William, that he acted the other time."

"You mean the other time he broke the milk-bottle?"

"Yes. He was playing smarty the same way that time. He broke three milk-bottles that time."

"You saw him break them that time?"

"Yes."

"But not this time?"

"No, but I know——"

"Stop, please! The jury is not interested in your opinion. Is there anything else you saw or heard that you care to tell the jury?"

"I don't think so," said Mrs. Bradley.

"Then," said Mr. Bradley, "I'll excuse you for the prosecution, but, as there is no one else to do it, I'll have to cross-examine you for the defense. Now, you said you were Billy Brad's mother, did you not?"

"Yes, I said that."

"You've known him a great many years, haven't you?"

"Of course I have," said Mrs. Bradley, smiling.

"From what you have seen of him during those years, Mrs. Bradley, would you say he was a bad, disobedient boy, or a good boy?"

"Why, he's a good boy," said Mrs. Bradley. "He's nearly always a good, sweet boy, of course. You know that as well as——"

"I only asked what you knew," said Mr. Bradley pleasantly. "That is all. You may go."

GLADYS GLEASON stood up. "Please, Mr. Bradley, can I say guilty now?" she asked.

"My goodness! Look here, Gladys," said Mr. Bradley. "You must not say he is guilty just to get him spanked. You must not say he is guilty unless you think he really broke the milk-bottle."

"But I want the doughnut," said Gladys, pouting.

"Well, you get the doughnut no matter what you say," said Mr. Bradley.

"Well, then, why can't I have it now?" Gladys demanded.

"Because I am going to give you the doughnut for listening to what is said, and for deciding whether Billy Brad broke the bottle or did not break it."

"Well, I decide he broke it," said Gladys.

"But we have had no proof that he broke it!" urged Mr. Bradley.

"I don't care! I think he broke it, anyhow," Gladys insisted. "I don't care whether he did or didn't, I think he broke it. Because he's a boy. And boys are always breaking things."

"ARTHUR," said Mr. Bradley, ignoring these unseemly remarks of the evidently prejudiced jury, "you're next. Will you sit on the bench while I ask you a few questions?"

"Yes, sir," said Arthur meekly.

He was that sort of boy. He was a good boy and he always would be a good boy. Arthur would never, it was safe to say, get into mischief unless dragged or pushed into it. Even after an afternoon spent in hop-skipping the stream of a garden-hose his hair was neatly smooth. He slid onto the garden bench shyly.

"Now, Arthur," said Mr. Bradley, "you know Billy Brad, don't you? You play with him sometimes?"

"Yes, sir," said the witness.

"And you played with him yesterday? In our back yard?"

"Yes, sir."

"And Billy Brad was cutting up and being funny and making you laugh, wasn't he?"

"I don't know," said Arthur shyly.

"But he was, wasn't he? Cavorting around and acting smarty and making you laugh?"

"I don't know."

"But you were playing with him, weren't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, wasn't he cutting up and making funny faces and that sort of thing?"

"I don't know."

"Well, what were you doing, then?"

"Playing."

"And what were you playing?"

"I don't know."

Mr. Bradley shook his head. "Well, tell me, Arthur," he said, beginning again, "while you were playing with Billy Brad did you see an empty milk-bottle? On our back porch or anywhere?"

"I don't know," said Arthur.

"Did you see it after it was broken?"

"I don't know," Arthur said.

"You don't know whether you saw it or not?"

"Yes, sir," Arthur said.

"Oh! You mean you did see it? Is that what you mean?"

"I don't know," said Arthur, putting his head down most shyly.

"My goodness!" ejaculated Mr. Bradley. "That's all! No cross-examination. Or, one minute, Arthur. Do you like doughnuts?"

"I—I don't know," said Arthur. "I—I guess so."

"That's all!" said Mr. Bradley. "Billy Brad, get up here. Now, listen! I'm

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going to ask you about that milk-bottle. Understand that?"

"Yes, Papa."

"And I want you to tell me the truth. Will you?"

"Yes, Papa."

"All right! Did you break that milk-bottle, Billy Brad?"

"What milk-bottle, Papa?" Billy Brad asked sweetly.

"The milk-bottle that was on the back porch," said Mr. Bradley. "The one your mother put there yesterday."

"The—the one that maybe a big old horse comed up on the po-urch and broked, Papa?" Billy Brad asked, his innocent blue eyes wide with interest.

"Look here, son," said Mr. Bradley sternly, "you are on trial. This is a serious matter for you, and I want a straight answer, and I don't want any of your maybes. A horse, indeed! You didn't see any horse in our back yard, did you? You didn't see any horse on our back porch, did you? You didn't see any horse break that milk-bottle, did you?"

"No, Papa."

"Well, who broke that milk-bottle?"

"Why—why—maybe a big, old neffelunt comed up on the back po-urch—" said Billy Brad cautiously.

"Wif a drate, bid twunk!" cried the little Graydon cherub eagerly. "Oo! A drate bid neffelunt!"

"And—and I bet I could chase it away," said Billy Brad vaingloriously. "For—for because I could get a big old, soword, and a big, old gun, I could, and—and——"

"Oo!" thrilled the young Graydon. "A drate, bid dun!"

"And—and bullets," said Billy Brad.

"Oo!" echoed the Graydon child. "Drate, bid buddets!"

"And—and I'd shoot the old neffelunt dead, I would," declared Billy Brad. "And I'd take the soword, and I'd chop the old neffelunt all to pieces, and—and it wouldn't break my mama's milk-bottles any more!"

"Billy Brad," said Mr. Bradley severely, "did you see an elephant in our yard yesterday?"

"No, Papa."

"Did you see one on the back porch?"

"No, Papa."

"Did you see one anywhere?"

"No, Papa."

"Did you hear one? Or smell one?"

"No, Papa."

"Did you see or hear or smell a horse in our back yard yesterday?

"No, Papa."

"Did Arthur break that milk-bottle?"

"No, Papa."

"Billy Brad, did *you* break it?" asked Mr. Bradley, pointing a commanding finger at the prisoner at the bar.

"Maybe—maybe a big, old cow comed up on our po-urch," said Billy Brad hopefully. With a gesture of disgust Mr. Bradley motioned Billy Brad off the garden bench. "Arthur," he said, to the previous witness, "I want to ask you another question: Did you see a horse or a cow or an elephant in our yard yesterday?"

"I—I don't know," said Arthur meekly.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Mr. Bradley. "Mary, did you see or hear a cow or a horse or an elephant in our yard?"

"Of course not!" exclaimed Mrs. Bradley. "That's nonsense."

"And—and—," said Billy Brad, "and maybe the big old horse and the big old neffelunt fighted on the po-urch . . . ."

"VERY well," said Mr. Bradley. "That is all the testimony. There are no more witnesses. Now, children—jury—you've heard what Mrs. Bradley and Arthur and Billy Brad have told us. You know as much about it as we do. There was a milk-bottle on the back porch, and it was broken. Billy Brad says Arthur did not break it, and no one was in the back yard but Arthur and Billy Brad. When I asked Billy Brad if he broke the bottle he would not give me a direct 'no.' He has not said he did not break it. It is for you to decide whether he broke the milk-bottle or did not break it. You can have a few minutes to talk it over and decide, while Mrs. Bradley and I go in and get the doughnuts we promised."

He went up the steps and into the house and Mrs. Bradley followed him.

"I don't know whether you mean all this seriously or not, William—" Mrs. Bradley said.

"Of course, I meant it seriously," said Mr. Bradley. "Those children are children, as Billy Brad is a child. They are his peers. They think as he thinks. Their mental processes are the same as his. Intuitively they know the truth. We, on the other hand, are adults——"

"I think I'll make a pitcher of lemonade, too," said Mrs. Bradley.

"Very well."

"You were saying——"

"The jury system," said Mr. Bradley, "much as it is maligned, it is a wonderfully fair system. Ninety-nine times out of one hundred a jury, after one and another member has made astoundingly asinine suggestions and arguments, arrives at the truth. The bulk common sense of the jury mass prevails. And you will see, my dear, that—knowing child nature as they do—a jury of children will give a true verdict. You can not fool them; I can not fool them; Billy Brad can not fool them. The truth will prevail."

"The Gleason twins did seem so anxious to have him spanked," said Mrs. Bradley doubtfully.

"The jury will decide," said Mr. Bradley.

WHEN Mr. Bradley, bearing the lemonade and the tray of tumblers, and Mrs. Bradley, bearing the doughnuts, appeared on the front porch, the jury had evidently reached a verdict. It sat like children who, playing a game, have decided on the word to be guessed.

Mr. Bradley looked at the bright, intelligent faces that looked back at him with eager interest, and smiled.

"Well, jury," he asked, "have you reached a verdict? Have you decided who broke the milk-bottle?"

"Yes, sir," said the small Hendrix boy, who sat at the end of the second step, "we has."

"You—you're going to spank whoever broke it, ain't you, Mr. Bradley," said, rather than asked, Gladys Gleason. "You are, ain't you?"

"Yes," said Mr. Bradley, "I am."

"Then—then," said the little Graydon cherub eagerly, "then you dot to spank a bid, old neffelunt, for betause a bid, old neffelunt bwoked it."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Mr. Bradley, and he looked at the bright, intelligent faces again. "Is that your verdict? Did you all agree on that?"

"Yes, sir," came in chorus, but Billy Brad added:

"And now can we have the doughnuts, Papa?"

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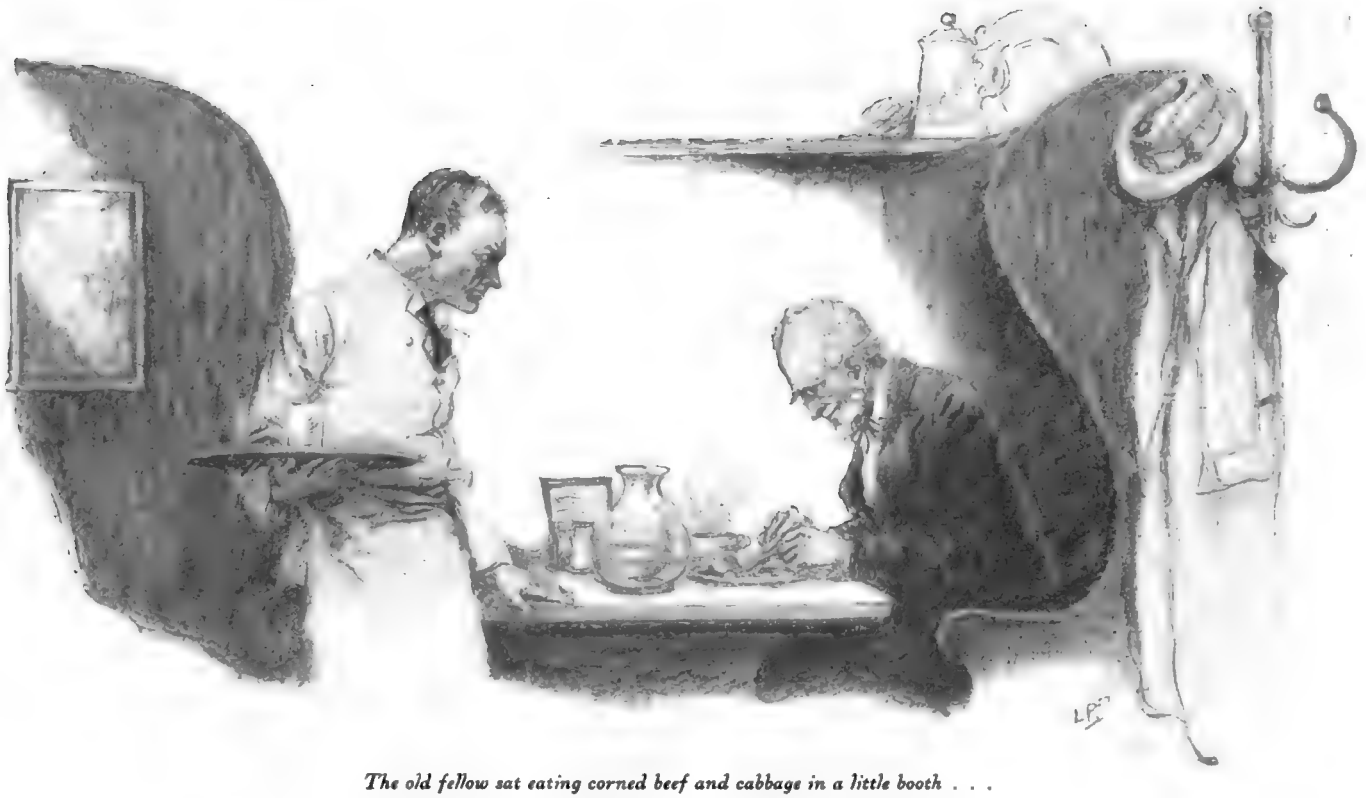

The old fellow sat eating corned beef and cabbage in a little booth . . .

Kale

By Don Marquis

The hero of this story is really a head of cabbage. It's the first story we can recall in which kale—both the kind that grows in the garden and the kind that grows in Wall Street—plays the title rôle. It's probably not a moral tale—Don Marquis has his fingers crossed—but you'll have to say it's a good one. And we have others of Don Marquis's coming.

"SEE that old fellow there?" asked Ed the waiter. "Well, his fad is money."

The old fellow indicated—he must have been nearly eighty—sat eating corned beef and cabbage in a little booth in a certain delightful, greasy old chop-house in down-town New York. It was nearly time to close the chop-house for that day, for it was almost eleven o'clock at night; it was nearly time to close the chop-house forever, for it was the middle of June, 1919. In a couple of weeks the war-time prohibition act would be in force, and Ed and I had been discussing what effect it would have upon our respective lives.

There was no one else in the place at the time except the cashier and the old man whose fad was money, and so Ed had condescended toward me, as a faithful customer, and was sitting down to have a drink with me.

"His fad is money?" I questioned, glancing at the old gentleman, who seemed to be nothing extraordinary as regards face or manner or attire. He had a long, bony New Englandish head and a short, white, well-trimmed beard; he was finishing his nowise delicate food with gusto. "I should say," I added, "that his fad was corned beef and cabbage."

"That's one of his fads," admitted Ed the waiter, "and I don't know but that it's as strong in him as his money fad. At any rate, I've never seen him without one or the other was near him, and both in large quantities."

We had been conversing in a mumble, so that our voices should not carry to the old gentleman. And now Ed dropped his voice still lower and whispered:

"That's Old Man Singleton."

I looked at him with a renewed interest. Every one knew who Old Man Singleton was, and many persons liked to guess how much he was worth. Ostensibly he had retired, leaving to his two sons the management of the Singleton banking business, with its many ramifications; but actually he kept his interest in the concern and was reputed to be coaching his grandsons in the ways of the world, and especially that part of the world known as "The Street."

Starting out as a New England villager who hated poverty because his family had always known it, he had come to New York as a lad of twenty, with red knitted mittens on his osseous hands, and he had at once removed the mittens and put the hands to work gathering money; it was rumored that the hands had never turned loose any of the garnered coin; it was even said by some persons that he still had the same pair of mittens. The details of his rise I can not give; he had achieved his ambition to be one of the very rich men of America because the ambition was so strong within him.

"Of course his fad is money," I muttered to Ed the waiter. "Everybody knows that Old Man Singleton's fad is money."

Ed was about to reply, when Mr. Singleton looked up and motioned for his check. Ed brought it, and gave the old gentleman his hat and his stick and his change.

"I hope everything was all right, Mr. Singleton," said Ed, palpably bidding for recognition and a tip.

"Eh?" said Singleton, looking blankly at Ed. "You know me, hey? I don't recall you. Yes, everything was all right, thank you." He gave the waiter a dime and passed out, after another blank, fumbling look at Ed, and a shake of his head. There was something feeble and wandering in the old fellow's manner; his memory was going; it was obvious that before long the rest of him would follow his memory.

"He shouldn't be allowed to go around this way alone at night," murmured Ed, watching the door through which he had made his exit. "But I suppose he's as

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bull-headed as ever about doing what he pleases, even if his legs are shaky."

"He didn't know you," I hinted, for I wished to learn all that Ed knew about Old Man Singleton.

Ed is a person who has been in the world nearly fifty years; he has had some very unusual acquaintances and experiences. It is never safe to predict just what Ed will know and what he will not know. One afternoon, after I had known Ed for about a year, I was attempting to argue some scientific point with a friend who was lunching with me, and Ed, who was waiting on us and listening, remarked: "I beg your pardon, sir, but it wasn't in 'The Descent of Man' that Darwin said that; it was in 'The Origin of Species.'"

And yet, if you deduce from that remark that Ed knows a great deal about modern science, you will be mistaken; as likely as not he could quote pages of Marcus Aurelius to you, and at the same time he might pronounce "Euripides" as if the last two syllables were one, riming with "hides"; his reading, like his life, has been elective.

"HE DOESN'T recall you," I repeated. "And that's ingratitude," said Ed, "if he only knew it. I saved the old man's life once."

And Ed limped over to the table and resumed his seat opposite me. He has a bullet under one knee-cap, and at times it makes him very lame. He would never tell me how it came there; to this day I do not know.

"From what did you save his life?" I asked.

"From a man," said Ed moodily. "From a man who had a notion to bean him one night. And to this day I ask myself: 'Did I do right, or did I do wrong?'"

"Tell me about it," I insisted.

"Drink up," said Ed, manipulating the Scotch bottle and the siphon of seltzer. "This is one of the last highballs you'll ever have, unless you sneak around and take it on the sly. I don't know that I should have another one myself; it settles in this damned knee of mine if I get a little too much."

"Tell me when, where and how you knew Old Man Singleton," I demanded again.

"This knee of mine," went on Ed, disregarding me, "is a hell of a handicap. We were talking about prohibition—what's prohibition going to do to me? Hey? It puts me out of a job in a barroom like this the first thing. And what else can I do? With this game leg, you can see me going on the stage as a Russian dancer, can't you? Or digging trenches to lay gas-pipes in, or carrying a hod? Huh? And I can't even get a job in a swell restaurant up-town; they don't want any game-legged waiters sticking around, falling over the chairs. This was about the only kind of a joint and the only kind of a job I was fit for, this chop-house thing down here, and it's going to close in two weeks. What then? Be somebody's housemaid? I can't see it. I don't wish anybody any bad luck, but I hope the guy that put over this prohibition thing gets stiff in all his joints and lives forever."

I sympathized and waited, and finally he began.

"Old Man Singleton's fad," said Ed, "as I remarked before, is money. And as you remarked, another of his fads is corned beef and cabbage—especially cabbage. He will eat corned beef with his cabbage, and like it; or he will eat pork with his cabbage, and like it; or he will eat cabbage without either; it is the cabbage he likes—or kale. In fact, you could reduce his two fads to one, and say what he likes is kale—kale in the slang sense of money, and kale that is cabbage. And all his life he has been stuffing himself with kale.

"His fad is kale that he can see and feel and handle and show and carry about with him. Not merely money in the bank and stocks and bonds and property and real estate, but actual cash. He likes to carry it with him, and he does carry it with him. I guess he likes the feel of it in his bill-folder, and the thought that he has got it on him—on him, the poor boy that came out of New England with the red knitted mittens on that everybody has heard so much about. I can understand the way he feels about it; with a folder full of thousand-dollar and ten-thousand-dollar bills he feels safe, somehow; feels like he'll never have to go back to that little New England town and saw cordwood and shovel snow again.

"He's got it on him now, that folder, and I'll bet you on it. That's what I meant when I said it wasn't safe for him to be trotting about this way after night. For if I know it, it stands to reason others know it, too.

"What you want to know is, how I know it. Well, I was not always what I am now. Once I was quite a guy and wore dress suits and went to the Metropolitan Opera and listened to Caruso as he jumped his voice from peak to peak. Yes, sir, I know every darned acoustic in that place! They weren't my dress suits that I wore, but they fit me. Once I moved in the circles of the idle rich, though they didn't know it, and helped 'em spend the unearned increment they wrung from the toil of the downtrodden laboring man.

"ONCE, to come down to brass tacks, I was a butler's companion. It is an office you won't find listed in the social directory, but it existed, for me at least. The butler in the case was a good friend of mine by the name of Larry Hodgkins, and being part Irish, he was an ideal English butler. Larry and his mother were in the employ of the Hergsheimers, a wealthy Jewish family—you know who they are if you read the financial pages or the Sunday supplements. Mrs. Hodgkins was the housekeeper and Larry was the butler, and when the Hergsheimers were traveling Larry and his mother stayed in the New York house as caretakers and kept things shipshape. And let me give you a tip, by the way: if you ever take a notion to quit the writing game and go into domestic service, plant yourself with a rich Hebrew family. They want things done right, but they are the most liberal people on earth, especially to Gentile servants.

"This Hergsheimer was Jacob Hergsheimer, and he was in right socially in New York, as well as financially; he had put himself across into the big time socially because, if you ask me, he belonged there; all the Hergsheimers didn't get across, but this one did. His New York house is up-town, between the sixties and the eighties, east of the Park, and he wants it kept so he can drop into it with his family and a flock of servants at any hour of the day or night, from any part of the earth, without a minute's notice, and give a dinner party at once, if he feels like it, and he frequently feels like it.

"It was Mrs. Hodgkins's and Larry's job to keep the fire from going out in the boilers, so to speak, and a head of steam on, so that the domestic ship could sail in any direction on receipt of orders by wire, wireless or telephone. They were permanent there, but Jake Hergsheimer and his family, as far as I could make out, never got more than an average of about three months' use a year out of that mansion.

"THIS time I am speaking of was nearly ten years ago. I was a waiter in an up-town restaurant, and both my legs were good then; Larry and I were old pals. The Jake Hergsheimers were sailing around the world in a yacht, and would be at it for about a year, as far as Larry knew, and he asked me up to live with him. I accepted; and believe me, the eight months I put in as Jake Hergsheimer's guest were *some* eight months. Not that Jake knew about it; but if he had known it, he wouldn't have cared. This Jake was a real human being.

"And his clothes fit me; just as if I had been measured for them. He had what you might call an automatic tailor, Jake did. Every six weeks, rain or shine, that tailor delivered a new suit of clothes to the Hergsheimer house, and he sent in his bill once a year, so Larry the Butler told me. Some people go away and forget to stop the milk; and when Jake sailed for the other side of the world he forgot to tell anybody to stop the tailor. Larry didn't feel as if it were any part of his duty to stop him; for Larry liked that tailor. He made Larry's clothes, too.

"And I didn't see where it was up to me to protest. As I said, Jake's garments might have been made for me. In fact, a great many of them *were* made for me. There were at least fifteen suits of clothes that had never been worn in that house, made to my measure and Jake's, when I became butler's companion in the establishment, and they kept right on coming. Also, there was a standing order for orchestra seats at the Metropolitan. Jake had a box every second Thursday, or something like that, but when he really wanted to hear the music and see the show he usually sat in the orchestra. Not only did his business suits fit me, but his dress clothes fit me, too.

"I used to go often, with a lady's maid that had the same access to clothing as I did. She was part of a caretaking staff also. Being a writing person, you have of course only viewed New York's society and near-society from the outside, and no doubt you have been intimidated by the haughty manners of the servants. Well, when you get close to swells and really know them personally, you will find they are human, too.

"A butler on duty is a swelled-up proposition, because he has to be that way. But take him as you find him among his peers, and he quits acting like the Duke of Westminster Abbey, and is real sociable. This Larry person, for instance, could

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distend himself like a poisoned pup and make a timid millionaire feel like the sleeves of his undershirt must be showing below his cuffs; but in our little select circle Larry was the life of the party.

"Being, as I said before, an outsider, you likely don't realize how many of those big swell millionaires' cribs up-town are in the hands of caretakers like Larry and his mother and me the best part of the year. Well, they are; and there's a social life goes on in them that don't ever get into the papers. The parties we had that year in Jake's house would have done Jake himself good, if Jake could have got an invitation to them. But Jake was absent, though his cellar and his grocers were at our service; and he never questioned a bill, Larry said. There were twelve or fifteen hand-picked servants in our little social circle that year, and before I left there I could begin to understand how these débutantes feel at the end of the season—sort of tired and bored and willing to relax and go in for work and rest and athletics for a change.

"I HAD only been butler's companion for a few weeks when Old Man Singleton dropped in one evening—yes, sir, Old Lemuel Singleton himself. He came to see the butler's mother, Mrs. Hodgkins. He had known her a good many years before, when he was wearing those red mittens and sawing wood up in that New England town and she was somebody's Irish cook. And he had run across her again, after he became a millionaire, down here in New York City. He was tickled to see her, and he didn't care a darn if she was Jake Hergsheimer's housekeeper. She could cook cabbage and kale better than any one else in the world, and he used to come and sit with her, and talk about that little old town up there, and indulge in his favorite dissipation.

"Old Man Singleton has had what you call the social entrée in New York for a good many years; for so long that some of his children, and all his grandchildren, were born with it. But he never took it very seriously himself. He has been an in-and-outer, you might say. If he saw Mrs. Hodgkins around Jake's house, he would call her Mary and ask her how folks were up home in front of Jake and his wife and a whole bunch of guests, just as soon as not.

"And his sons and his daughters and his grandchildren never could get him out of those ways; he always was bull-headed about doing what he pleased, so Mrs. Hodgkins told me, and he always will be. And the old lady liked to see him and chin with him and cook for him; and believe me, she was some cook when she set herself to it. Not merely kale, but everything. She didn't cook for the Hergsheimers—they had a chef for that—but they missed it by not having her. Victuals was old Mary's middle name, and she could rustle up some of the best grub you ever threw your lip over.

"At first, Old Man Singleton and Mrs. Hodgkins didn't mix much with us younger folks when we pulled a party. It wasn't that we were too aristocratic for them, for off duty, as I said before, butlers and other swells can be as easy and jolly as common people. But they seemed too antiquated, if you get me; they were living too much in the past.

"And then, one night, I discovered what Old Man Singleton's fad was—kale. Money. Big money. Big money on his person. It was this way: Larry and I wanted to go down-town and have a little fun, but neither of us had any cash in hand. Larry had a check for one hundred and fifty dollars which Jake Hergsheimer had sent him, but all the tradesmen we knew were closed at that hour, and there wasn't any way to cash it, unless Old Man Singleton could.

"'Mr. Singleton,' says Larry to the old man, who was sitting down to a mess of pork and kale with Mrs. Hodgkins, 'maybe you can cash this for me.' And he handed him the check.

"The old man stopped eating and put his glasses on and pulled a bill-folder out of his pocket, with a kind of pleased smile on his face.

"'Let me see,' he says, taking out the bills, and running them over with his fingers; 'let me see.'

"I nearly dropped dead. There wasn't a bill in there of lower denomination than one thousand dollars; and most of them were ten-thousand-dollar bills.

"'No, Larry,' says the old man, 'I'm afraid I can't, afraid I can't—haven't got the change.'

"And while we stood there and looked, he smoothed and patted those bills, and folded and refolded them, and then put them back into his pocket, and patted the pocket.

"'Mary,' he says to the old woman with a grin, 'that's quite a lot of money for little Lem Singleton to be carrying around in his pocket, ain't it?'

"'It is that, Lemuel,' said the old lady, 'and I should think you'd be afraid of leaving it out of the bank.'

"'Well, Mary,' says the old man, 'I kind o' like to have it around me all the time—uh—huh! a little bit where I can put my hands on it, all the time. I used to carry gold; but I gave that up; it's too heavy, for what it's worth. But I like it, Mary; I used to look at that gold and say to myself, "Well, there's one thing you got, Lem Singleton, they never thought you'd get when you left home! And they aren't going to take it away from you, either!" It was a long time before I could make paper seem as real to me as gold. But it does now.'

"And what does the old bird do but take it out of his pocket again and crinkle it through his fingers and smooth it out again and pet it and do everything but kiss it. Larry and I stood looking at him with our eyes sticking out; and he looked at us and laughed. It came to me all of a sudden that he liked to come where we servants were because he could pull that kind of thing in front of us, but that he was sort of lost among the swell-society bunch because he didn't dare pull it there and didn't feel so rich among them.

"'MY, GOD, Larry,' I said, when we were outside the house, 'did you notice how much kale the old man had there?'

"'Uh-huh,' said Larry. 'Mother always cooks a lot for him.'

"'Wake up, Stupid,' I said. 'I don't mean cabbage. I mean money. There must have been nearly two hundred thousand dollars in that roll!'

"'He always has around one hundred thousand dollars on him, at least,' says Larry. 'And I've seen him flash as high as a quarter of a million.'

"'Well,' I says, 'something ought to be done about it.'

"'What do you mean, Ed?' says he.

"'Oh, nothing,' I said.

"We walked over to get the L train down-town, saying nothing, and then finally Larry remarked:

"'Electricity is a great thing, Ed.'

"'I never said it wasn't,' says I.

"'It's a great thing,' says Larry, 'but when you sit on it, sit on it right. For instance, I'd a darned sight rather sit in one of these electric trains than in that electric chair up at Sing Sing.'

"'Who said anything about an electric chair?' I asked him.

"'Nobody said anything,' says Larry, 'but you're thinking so darned loud I can get you.'

"'Piffle, peanuts and petrification,' I said. 'Take care of your own thoughts, and I'll skim the fat off of mine myself.'

"WELL, as I said, after that we got better acquainted, the old man and I. I paid more attention to him. He interested me more. I've always been interested in science of all kinds, and the year I spent in Jake Hergsheimer's house I cut the leaves of a lot of books in his library and gave them the once over. I was always interested in psychology, even before the word got to be a headliner in the Sunday supplements, and I took a good deal of pleasure that winter trying to get inside of Old Man Singleton's mind. I must say, I never got very far in, at that. My general conclusion at the end is what it was at the beginning—his fad is kale.

"And he loved to show it, you could see that. Not that he pulled it every time he happened to be at one of our parties. Often he would drop in that winter from some swell social event at one of the big houses up-town, where he had been a guest, and eat some of old Mary's chow, and never intimate by word or look that he had all that kale on him. And then again he'd come among us, diked out in the soup and fish, and flash the roll, for no other reason that I know except he enjoyed seeing us get the blind staggers, which we always did. And then he'd fuss with it and pet it and go into a dream over it, and wake up again and grin and talk about life with old Mary. And they agreed about life; you never heard two more moral persons exchange views. It was sometimes as good as a Sunday-school to listen to them for half an hour.

"One night, when they had been gassing for a while, they sort of got my goat, and I said to him:

"'Mr. Singleton, does it ever strike you as a little peculiar that you should have so much money and so many other people, such as myself, none at all?'

"'No, Ed,' he says. 'No, it doesn't. That's the Lord's way, Ed! Money is given as a sacred trust by the Lord to them that are best fitted to have and to hold.'

"'Meaning,' I asked him, 'that if you were ever to let loose of any of it, it might work harm in the world?'

"He chewed over that for quite a while, as if he saw something personal in it, and he gave me a ten-dollar bill for a Christmas present. He isn't as stingy as some people say he is; he just looks so stingy

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"She could cook cabbage and kale better than anyone else in the world, and he used to come and sit with her and indulge in his favorite dissipation."

that if he was the most liberal man on earth he would get the reputation of being stingy.

"The lady's maid that I used to go to the opera with quit me a little while after Christmas. She and I were walking around the promenade between the acts one night at the Metropolitan and Larry was with us, when a fellow stopped Larry and spoke to him. I could see the guy looking at the girl and me as he and Larry talked. Later, Larry told me that it was one of Jake Hergsheimer's friends, and he had been a little bit surprised to see Larry at the opera all diked out, and he had wanted to know who the girl was.

"Well, anyhow, she never went to the opera with me after that; but a few weeks later I saw her at a cabaret with Jake's friend. It was grief to me; but I got into some real trouble, or let it get into me, about the same time, and that helped take the sting off. I had once been married—but there's no use going into all that. Anyhow, when the marriage kind o' wore off, my own folks took my wife's side of the case and she went to live with them. My old dad was sick, and they needed money, and my wife wrote to me that she was willing to let bygones be bygones and accept some money from me, and that my parents felt the same way, and there was a kid, too, that my folks were bringing up.

"Well, I was desperate for some way to get hold of some cash and send to them. In the end, I took one of Jake Hergsheimer's silver vases and hocked it and sent the money, and got it out of hock two or three months later; but in the meantime there was a spell when I was so hard pressed it looked to me like I would actually have to do something dishonest to get that money.

"One night, before Jake Hergsheimer came to my rescue and lent me that silver vase, if you want to call it that, I was sitting alone in the house thinking what a failure in life I was, and how rotten it was to have a wife and kid and parents all set against me, and drinking some of Jake's good booze, and getting more and more low in my mind, when there came a ring at the front door-bell. The butler was out, and old Mary was asleep way up in the top of the house, at the back, and wouldn't hear.

" 'I'll bet,' I said to myself, 'that's Old Man Singleton nosing around for his cabbage.' And I made up my mind I wouldn't let him in—he could ring till he froze to death on the front steps, and I wouldn't. It was a blustery, snowy January night, with new snow over the old ice underneath, and I says to myself, 'It's a wonder the old coot don't slip down and bust some of those big New England bones of his. And I wouldn't care much if he did.'

"But he kept on ringing, and finally I thought I'd better go and let him in. I didn't have any ulterior notions when I went up the stairs from the servants' dining-room and made for the front door. But the minute I clapped eyes on him I thought of all that kale in his pocket.

"I opened the front door, but outside of that was an iron grille. It had a number of fastenings, but the final one was a short, heavy iron bar that lay in two sockets, one on each side of the opening.

"I lifted the bar and swung the grille open.

" 'Ha! Hum!' said he, and sneezed. 'It's you, Ed, is it?'

"And, snuffing and sneezing, he passed in front of me.

"And as he passed by me that bar said something to my hand. And the hand raised up. It wasn't any of my doings, it was all the hand and the bar. It raised up, that bar did, right behind the old man's head. He stopped just outside the front door and flapped his big bony feet on a rug that was there, to get the snow off his shoes, and while he flapped and sneezed that bar was right over the old man's brain-box.

" 'Well,' I said to myself, 'here is your chance to be an honest man and a prosperous man, reunited with your wife and your kid and your folks at home, and not have to borrow anything from Jake Hergsheimer's collection—just one little tap on the old man's head, and down he goes, and he's got anywhere from one hundred thousand to two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in his clothes.'

" 'Yes,' said myself to me, 'one little tap, and maybe you kill him. What then? The electric chair, huh?'

" 'Hell!' I said to myself. 'Take a chance! The old man has so much money that what he has in his pocket means nothing to him one way or another. Larry's gone till morning, and the old woman won't wake for a long time. It means a little bit of a headache for Old Lemuel here, and it means your chance to lead an honest life hereafter and be a useful citizen and take care of those you have been neglecting.'

" 'Yes,' said myself to me, 'it's more moral to do it, and make your life over, but you never have been one for morality in the past. Besides, you'd kill him.'

"And I might have killed him, boss. I wasn't sure of it then, but I've been sure of it since then. I was that strung up that I would have hit too hard.

"And yet, I might *not* have done so! I might have hit him just enough to put him out and make my get-away, and I might have led an honest life since then.

"But at the moment I couldn't do it. I saw, all of a sudden, something funny. I saw the old man stamping his feet and getting the snow off, and I thought of him as a dead man, and I says to myself: 'How damned funny for a dead man to stamp the snow off his feet!' And I laughed.

" 'Heh? Heh? What did you say, Ed?' says the old man, and turns around.

"I dropped the iron bar to my side, and that dead man came up out of the grave.

" 'Nothing, Mr. Singleton,' I said. 'I was just going to say, go on in, and I'll get a brush and clean the snow off of you.'

"I said I saved his life from a man one time. Well, I was the man I saved his life from.

"HE WENT on in, and I barred the grille and locked the door, and we went on down to the dining-room. I was shaking, and still I wasn't easy in my mind. I told him there wasn't anybody home but me, and he said he'd take a drop of Jake's brandy. And while I was opening a bottle of it for him, what does he do but pull out that bill-folder.

" 'For God's sake, Mr. Singleton,' I said, turning weak and sitting down in a

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chair all of a sudden, 'put that money up.'

"He sat there and sipped his brandy and talked, but I didn't hear what he was saying. I just looked at him, and kept saying to myself, should I have done it? Or should I have let him go by?

"Boss, that was nearly ten years ago, and I've been asking myself that question from time to time ever since. Should I have done it? Was it moral to refuse that chance to make my life over again? You know me, kid. You know some of me, at least. You know I don't hold much by morals. If I was to tell you how I got that bullet under my knee-cap, you'd know me better than you do. If I had hit him just right and made my getaway, I would have led a different life.

"And I wouldn't now be waiting for my death-sentence. For that's practically what this prohibition thing means to me. I can't work at anything but this. And this is through with. And I'm through with. I'm a bum from now on. There's no use kidding myself; I'm a bum.

"And yet, often, I'm glad I didn't do it."

Ed brooded in silence for a while.

And then I said, "It's strange he didn't know you."

"It's been ten years," said Ed, "and you saw that the old man's got to the doddering stage. He likely wouldn't know his own children if he didn't see them every day or two."

"I suppose," I said, "that the old man feels he is ending his days in a very satisfactory manner—the national prohibition thing triumphant, and all that."

"How do you mean?" asked Ed.

"Don't you know?" I said. "Why, Old Man Singleton, it is said, helped finance the fight, and used his money and his influence on other big money all over the country in getting next to doubtful politicians and putting the thing through the state legislatures. I don't mean there was anything crooked about it anywhere, but he was one of the bunch that represented organized power, and put the stunt across while the liquor interests were still saying national prohibition could never come."

"The hell he did!" said Ed. "I didn't know he was mixed up with it. I never saw him take a drink, now that I remember, except the brandy on the night I saved his life."

"Old Man Singleton," I said, "is credited with having had more to do with it than any other one person, by those who are on the inside."

"He smoothed and patted those bills, and folded and refolded them . . . . ."

"The old coot!" said Ed. And then added wryly: "I hope he gets as stiff in his knee-joint as I am and lives forever! He's made a bum of me!"

IT WAS three or four weeks after my talk with Ed that I read in the papers of a peculiar accident of which Old Man Singleton had been the victim. A head of cabbage, he said, had fallen out of a tree and hit him on his own head one evening as he was walking alone in Central Park. He had been dazed by the blow for a moment; and when he regained his feet a considerable sum of money which he had been carrying was gone. He was sure that he had been struck by a head of cabbage, for a head of cabbage lay on the pathway near him when he was helped to his feet. He did not pretend to be able to say how a head of cabbage could have gotten into one of the park trees.

The police discredited his story, pointing out that likely the old man, who was near-sighted, had blundered against a tree in the dusk and struck his head. The head of cabbage, they told the reporters, could have had nothing to do with it; it could not have come into contact with his head at all, unless, indeed, some one had put it into a sack and swung it on him like a bludgeon; and this, the police said, was too absurd to be considered. For why should a crook use a head of cabbage, when the the same results might have been attained with the more usual blackjack, stick or fist?

Old Man Singleton was not badly hurt; and as regarded the loss of the money, he never said, nor did his family ever say, just how large the sum was. Mr. Singleton had the vague impression that after the cabbage fell out of the tree and hit him he had been helped to his feet by a man who limped and who said to him: "Kale is given to them that can best use it, to have and to hold."

He did not accuse this person, who disappeared before he was thoroughly himself again, of having found the money which had evidently dropped from his pocket when the cabbage fell from the tree and hit him, but he was suspicious, and he thought the police were taking the matter too lightly; he criticised the police in an interview given to the papers. The police pointed out the irrelevance of the alleged words of the alleged person who limped, and intimated that Mr. Singleton was irrational and should be kept at home evenings; as far as they were concerned, the incident was closed.

But I got another slant at it, as Ed might have said. Last winter I was talking at my club with a friend just back from Cuba, where the rum is red and joy is unconfined.

"I met a friend of yours," he said, "by the name of Ed down there, who is running a barroom and seems to be quite a sport in his way. Sent his regards to you. Must have made it pay—seems to have all kinds of money. Named his barroom 'The Second Thought.' Asked him why. He said nobody knew but himself, and he was keeping it a secret—thought you might guess. Wants you to come down. Sent you a message. Let's see: what was it? Oh, yes! Cryptic! Very cryptic! Wrote it down—here it is: *'Kale! Kale! The gang's all here.'* Make anything out of it? I can't."

I could, though I didn't tell him what. But I shall not visit Ed in Cuba; I consider him an immoral person.

The Sphinx

By Edna Valentine Trapnell

I SIT among the desert sands
And watch the centuries come and go,
And all that is of human hands
The sands and centuries have brought low.
I saw the long processions pass
Of conquerors and slaves and kings—
Above them the brown desert grass
Mocks at their vain imaginings.

Princes and scepters pass away,
None trembles now at Pharaoh's nod;
But in my shadow yesterday
I marked two lovers where they trod.
Travelers they were from some far land,
The maid within his arms he drew—
Thus saw I Pharaoh's daughter stand
When the Great Pyramid was new!

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A Strip *of* Green Paper

By Frederick Orin Bartlett

Mr. Bartlett has written here a powerful and unusual story reversing a familiar situation: the story of the disinherited *father*. His next story in the series he is writing for EVERYBODY'S is called "Intangibles."

AS A father, Hinckley certainly had very little either to complain of or to regret in the twenty-two years he had borne that title. Not, of course, that Junior had not given him his bad moments. That was to be expected, particularly of an only child. The boy at the very start was indirectly responsible for some of the most terrible hours of Hinckley's life—nerve-racking hours when the fate of both mother and son hung in a balance so evenly adjusted between light and darkness that it was a question which way it would swing. Everything came out all right in the end, but this was one reason why there were no more children.

Hinckley was absurdly proud of the youngster, even when there was nothing in particular to be proud of. As a baby Hinckley, Junior, averaged up pretty well as soon as he secured a fair toe-hold, but this was all. In fact, this was all that could be said at this time of Hinckley senior.

He had gone to work for the Barclay Machine Company after getting through the high school and plugged along with indifferent success in the office until he was twenty-five.

Then he met Alice Hemmingway—a nice sort of girl with a college education and a little money of her own. Her family and all her friends thought she was throwing herself away on Hinckley and were not backward in letting him know what they thought. As a matter of fact, they were unjust. He had not, to be sure, yet distinguished himself; but he was a rugged, clean-living young fellow with a whole lot of life still ahead of him. And his love for Alice Hemmingway was deep and honest.

From the start it put new ambition into him. The company sent him out on the road and he made so good that in three years he was brought back and appointed sales-manager on a salary that allowed him to ask Alice to marry him. She consented and her family dutifully made it just as unpleasant for her as they could on this joyous occasion.

ON THE whole this was probably more beneficial to Hinckley than fair treatment would have been, because it spurred him on to renewed efforts. He saw that as a salaried man he was bound to be limited and kept his eyes open for an opportunity to go into business for himself.

He was thirty when he ran across the automatic valve that later was to be known the world over as the Hinckley valve. Johnson, a workman in the plant, had developed it and tried to interest the company, but they were too busy about their own affairs.

Hinckley heard of it, investigated, and realized instantly its possibilities. He talked it over with Alice and she agreed to entrust her little personal account to him as she was always willing to agree to anything he proposed. She was as naively cheerful about it as though their fortunes were already made.

But Hinckley knew better. He was taking a risk and realized it, but he took it with his jaws set. He resigned from the Barclay Company, bought a small plant and started manufacturing, working alongside of Johnson on the lathes half of the time and putting the other half of the day on the selling proposition. The pace was too fast for Johnson. At the end of the year, with nothing much but hard work to show for his efforts, he sold out to Hinckley for the few hundred dollars Hinckley had left.

And Hinckley kept on. He kept on as a prize-fighter keeps on after his strength has left him and only his nerve remains. But it is just at this point that big fights are either won or lost.

He was working on credit now, borrowing on everything he had in order to keep the plant in operation. Every time he borrowed he clipped another hour off his sleeping-time.

Alice was pretty well worried. She saw him lose weight, saw his eyes get dark and hollowed, heard him mumble uneasily in the few hours' sleep he did reluctantly allow himself.

"WHAT'S the use, Sam?" she asked. The reply he made was to compress his lips the firmer and choke huskily.

"This thing has *got* to go."

"It isn't as serious as that," she pleaded.

"I've staked everything."

"Nonsense. You've only staked a few dollars."

"Your dollars."

"No, just dollars. Dollars don't belong to any one except those who happen to have them."

But of course the curse of this situation was that the more wonderful she showed herself, the more acutely necessary it became to make the thing a success. The more worth fighting for she proved herself, the harder he must fight. All this while he could see the whole Hemmingway family leering at him. They knew his struggle, although they never learned from Alice. She held her head higher than ever.

These were days when it was none too easy to entertain, but she did entertain. She had her family often to lunch in the flat she occupied, and spent hours cooking things that did not cost much, so that they came out little masterpieces. And she talked freely of Sam and of his fine prospects.

That was a bad year—the year in which Junior was born. Hinckley ran up against a good many obstacles he had not expected—the Barclay Company for one. They had a valve of their own. It was not as good a valve as Hinckley's, but that only made them struggle the harder to keep Hinckley out of the market. And they had unlimited capital to work with. Hinckley at this time had not had so much business experience but what he honestly supposed the best valve would win; that marketing a product was merely a question of merit.

THE most discouraging blow he met was when he learned that, although in the face of conclusive proof his valve was the better, the trade continued to buy Barclay's. He was forced to find a new market, and that took him West a good deal. He could not afford to take Alice with him, so he left her alone in New York at a time when she should not have been. For one day she whispered to him her secret—that, if all went well, there would be in the course of time three of them. Hinckley caught his breath. Three of them and one of them a life dependent upon him utterly.

He had been fighting off for some time indirect proposals from Barclay, but at this moment he was sorely tempted. He knew he could get out of debt and have, not the fortune he had gambled for, but a few thousands and safety in his old job. With the new life coming that was perhaps what he had best do.

Yet when he went down-town that morning and came to the shop bearing the sign "Hinckley Valve Company" he had a fresh vision. Supposing this third should be a son? Then that business name which now concerned him alone would concern another. It might be—it might be that, not on the inconspicuous shop, but on the four-story building he had always visualized, the sign might read "Hinckley & Son."

Hinckley smiled, but his jaws were set. That very day when he opened his mail he found himself in receipt of the largest order he had yet taken. He interpreted it as an omen. As a matter of fact, it really was a turning-point. Not, by any means, that it was easy sledding from this point on. It was not. The Hinckley business was one of slow growth, but he now had with him as a business partner encouragement instead of discouragement. It was well, because the man then was not far removed from physical, mental and financial bankruptcy. He had come that near his limit and certainly could not have stood the crisis that confronted him with the birth of the boy.

When Sam was a year old, Hinckley had prospered to a point where he ventured

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to buy a small house just outside New York and begin really to live. It surprised even Alice to see how completely engrossed in this child Hinckley became. He had more patience with the little fellow than even she had, which is saying a good deal. Night after night he walked the floor with him, although he was advised that it was better for Sam junior to be allowed to cry it out in his crib.

"He'll make a galley-slave of you," was the prophecy of those who knew.

"All right, I'm game," answered Hinckley.

To tell the truth, he was. During the next five years he seldom had an uninterrupted night, but no one ever heard a growl out of him. He accepted this task as a duty and a personal responsibility. Even when he reached a point when he could easily afford a nurse, he never considered shifting his burden. He would have felt like a traitor to have placed the matter of his own comfort before a desire of the child's. He had brought the little fellow here and meant to stick by him.

His reward was to feel the tiny hands reach through the dark for his strong arms and to hear the sobbing die away as the baby nestled safe against his shoulder with a murmured "Daddy." Hinckley used to swell all up with pride at that. It made him feel a little bit like God.

Of course such treatment bade fair to spoil the child. Sam junior from the beginning absolutely dominated the house. Nothing could be done, nothing was attempted, which in any way interfered with the good pleasure of this young prince. Neither Hinckley nor his wife ever considered for a moment going out at night for fear Sam might call. For ten years they attended neither theatre nor concert. And they were in a position to do that now to their hearts' content as far as money was concerned.

Drawing by H. Weston Taylor

But when beside her, stars a thousand times bigger than the earth were but diamonds for her hair. Waves which had traveled across half an ocean came only to break at her feet.

YEAR by year the business of the Hinckley Valve Company had grown until the four-story building was an actuality. But Hinckley did not let up with that accomplishment. He was still the first man in the office in the morning and the last to leave at night. He continued that program even after his assured income had exceeded his original dreams—even after his bank-account was twice what he had ever hoped.

By the time the boy was twelve Hinckley was rated as worth a quarter-million, which, well invested, was enough to keep the three in decent comfort had he never earned another penny. Alice remembered when he used to say that a man who had this much was a fool for working any more. Sometimes she reminded him of that.

"I haven't any more than laid a foundation so far," he answered.

"For what?" she inquired.

"For the business. Why, it will take all my life and the boy's too before this thing is built to what it ought to be."

The boy's, too. Sam was in a swagger prep school now preparing for Harvard. He was a slim, hard-muscled lad who was getting a whole lot of fun out of life in a decent way. Alice did not have anything to worry about in that direction. He had gone in for football and made the freshman team, and he had gone in for everything else and made it.

He was spending more money a year than his father at his age ever spent in five—more money, in fact, than his father was spending on himself to-day. His clothes cost more than his father's, his incidental expenses were more; even his club dues, at fourteen, were more. Hinckley never protested, never questioned, any of these expenses. He could afford them and was glad to have the boy enjoy the best.

It was the same way in college. He gave Sam an allowance as a starting-point, but he cheerfully settled all bills exceeding his allowance. The boy was in no way dissipated, but he spent five times as much money as was necessary. There was no reason why he should not. The money was there—a golden stream increasing in volume each year. As money it was of no special value to any one. Not until it was converted into the satisfaction of wants did it amount to anything.

Hinckley's attitude in this matter of expenditure was one of complete indifference. As long as the young man kept out of trouble, he could have what he wished. This was merely a continuation of the policy he had pursued ever since Sam was born. Hinckley still saw him as a child, in spite of the fact that Sam was now some six feet tall and physically very much his superior. He still felt the same responsibility.

In his senior year Sam had an ugly attack of pneumonia. Hinckley dropped his business and took the next train to Cambridge and stayed by the boy's bedside in the hospital not only until he was out of danger but until he was discharged. He would have done this had he known positively that his business would go to pot in the meanwhile. Alice of course came along with him, but she spent most of her time keeping Hinckley steady. He lost his head completely every time the boy was ill. As soon, however, as Sam was well again, Hinckley forgot him and went back to work—back to the business which was absorbing more and more of his time.

Alice, on the other hand, had her thoughts on the boy continuously and worried most about him when he was well—worried more about him as he neared the end of his college career. She used to write him long letters three or four times a week, telling him a great deal about his father's activities, in an attempt to keep him in touch with the business. She received in return buoyant, hurried notes vibrant with the sheer joy of living, ending with the curt "Love to Dad."

WHEN he came home for his final Christmas recess, his time was so occupied with ice sports in the morning, teas in the afternoon, dinners, theatres and dances at night, that the only way she could see him was to sit up and steal down-stairs when she heard the latch-key in the front door toward morning. He used to scold her for that and then put his strong arm around her and kiss her and tell her all about what he had been doing and the newest, prettiest girl he had met. He was handsome, this boy of hers, and he even made her thrill with the magic of his dark

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eyes. And he made her sense again what it is to be twenty-one and strong of body and alert of sense.

"Have a care those pretty girls don't turn your head," she used to warn him.

But down deep in her heart she felt it was the pretty girls who needed a warning. At any rate, warnings of all sorts were wasted on him. That was what made her start. That was what made her think. Somewhere along the line, while she was still thinking of him as her child, he had taken possession of himself. And her husband did not yet realize this.

She sensed it through Sam's changed attitude toward her. Actually he dominated her. He controlled her. She was his mother, not he her son. She was his mother, not as a protector but as a dear responsibility. He ordered her to bed; he advised her about her clothes; he even dictated her diet. She did not resent this. She rather enjoyed it. She even felt that it was natural. Yet it was odd, too.

For a long time the gulf between their ages had been filling up. When she was twenty-five and Sam but one day old, that gulf had been a mile wide. Now that she was forty-six and he twenty-one the gulf had disappeared completely. He stood before her a full-grown man with a stronger grip on life than she had. In the next ten years he would get stronger and stronger and she—was it possible that in the end their positions would be completely reversed and she become the child?

But Hinckley saw nothing of this. He was beginning now to talk more and more of the time when the boy would be ready to go in and learn the business. His personal fortune had passed the million-dollar mark and he was now headed for two. By unrelenting labor he had twice doubled his market and his plant. Now he was on the point of doing it again, although this also meant doubling his labor and responsibilities.

For, even with the organization he had built up, the business was dependent for growth upon his energy and personality. In the trade name of the Hinckley valve the emphasis was still upon Hinckley rather than valve, especially since in the past few years other valves had come into the field equaling his in efficiency. To reach the goal he had set for himself he must tap new sources of energy. These, fortunately, he had at hand in the boy—in the youth he himself had created.

But Hinckley Junior knew nothing about these plans.

II

AFTER graduating in June, Sam motored down to New Haven with friends for the boat-race and then, instead of going on to New York, as had been his intention, he joined other friends who were starting on a yachting trip the next day for the Maine coast. He was gone longer than he had at first planned because he continued to have an even better time than he had expected.

At Bar Harbor he ran across Doris Baker, an attractive débutante of last winter whom he had met during the holidays without fully appreciating her attractiveness. But he had more leisure now, and a much better opportunity of seeing Doris at her best. She was an honest out-of-doors girl who did not mind either tan or freckles, wind or rain, and shook hands with a man as though she meant it. She was not as pretty as her sisters, but she did not mind that either. She had the same black hair and long-lashed black eyes, but nothing of their thin, fragile figures and delicate white fingers. Neither was she ever forced to give a headache as an excuse for remaining in seclusion.

Sometimes, however, at a late bridge or dance she was obliged to confess that she was sleepy—an unpardonable admission, according to Frances, if not one of questionable taste. She liked Sam because he never made her feel that way about this. Perhaps because after a strenuous day out-of-doors he got sleepy himself toward midnight. With tennis in the forenoon, golf after lunch, with an hour in the ocean sandwiched in between, this was, after all, a more or less natural condition. Neither of them was a star at these games, but they both played hard and the best they knew how, enjoying every minute.

Frankly and openly both Doris and Sam were perfectly willing to admit they were glad they were living. At the end of a month, when they had been together as constantly as opportunity offered, each was willing to admit—to himself—that never had he been quite as glad of that as now. The day broke cleaner and fresher for each; the sun burned more golden out of a sky grown a brighter azure, reached its zenith only too hurriedly, and slid off into its riotous bed of color at a pace that looked like pure cheating.

SAM was half afraid of the evenings. There were many things about them he did not understand. That was why, whenever it was possible, he persuaded Doris to get them both out of bridge or concert or dancing, and walk along the ocean with him in an attempt to explain the mysteries that lay all around them.

He never questioned her directly of why the stars seemed to sing together, of why and of what the ocean whispered to him, of how it was that suddenly this whole planet of earth and ocean and all the other planets and moons and stars—with all the spaces in between—appeared to have been created for just them; and yet, somehow, she seemed to supply the answer.

Let him come out here alone and he was not overwhelmed with any such egotism. Quite the contrary. He was then of no more consequence than any single grain of sand. But when beside her, stars a thousand times bigger than the earth were but diamonds for her hair. Waves which had traveled across half an ocean came only to break at her feet.

They were sitting on the rocks one such gladsome evening when he suddenly broke out:

"Why, it's you—just you!"

"What is?" she demanded with a trace of a challenge.

"All this wonderful world."

She turned with a start to question his eyes. Then quickly she turned away again. They told her the truth—those eyes—the truth her heart craved and yet had been half afraid to face. But when his hand closed over hers she allowed it to rest so.

"Sam," she said, "there isn't any use to pretend I'm not glad when I am, is there?"

"You do love me a little?" he breathed.

"Oh—oh, yes," she nodded.

"Then," he cried exultingly, "I don't see that I've got anything more to worry about!"

And as far as any one else could see, that was so. He went to Daddy Baker the next day, and though this girl, the youngest, was his pet, he welcomed young Hinckley with honest enthusiasm.

"She's worth the best," declared Baker. "And I'd trust her to choose only the best."

"I'm sure in luck to be chosen," answered Sam.

"Yes," agreed Baker calmly. "You are. But I have a notion there is something a good deal more than luck in it. I suspect you deserve it."

And Mother Baker agreed. She had done a good deal of quiet investigating for a week.

Two days later Sam returned to New York to inform his own family. He journeyed through a blue-and-gold world so fair that he could conceive of nothing left for the preacher to promise him as a reward for being any better than he was. Not that he dwelt much on that prospect. He was hardly concerned beyond the next few months. He saw no reason why he should not be married in the early fall. Doris had agreed as far as she was concerned, and certainly she was more concerned than any one else.

The trick was to buy a little house not too far out of town and near a good country club where he could pursue a pet ambition of his. He wanted to write. He had stood rather above the average of his class in English work and had done more or less for the college periodicals in the line of short stories. With plenty of time this winter he wished seriously to try himself out.

The question of money never entered his head. His father had plenty for everybody and then some. It had always been so ever since he could remember. And in the end, of course, his father's fortune would be his. So this problem, which occupies so large a part of most men's lives, he was able to ignore. Here again Sam was in luck and appreciated it. With no taste for business, he might have found himself tied to the daily grind of drudgery as his father had always been; as his father was to-day, for that matter, though it was his choice. The last time he was home he had suggested to his mother that it was time his father quit and enjoy life.

"You're right, Sam," she answered. "But—but I don't think I'd say anything to him about it."

III

SAM reached New York in the afternoon and, instead of going home, took a taxi to his father's office. This was not what he had intended; it was the result of a sudden impulse. He wished to confide this, the biggest event so far in his career, first to his father. This step he was about to take gave him a new sense of his importance as a man and in so doing threw him into a closer relationship with the only other man in the family.

He had a notion that Doris was just the sort of girl his father would like, although until now he had not considered this at all. Luckily he had with him a picture of her, though it did not do her justice. What he should have done was to bring Doris herself along. Then no possible question could have been raised.

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Sam breezed into the office at an extremely busy time, but he waited cheerfully enough the half-hour his father was engaged. When he did finally reach him, he thought he looked tired.

"Good Lord, Dad," he exclaimed, "you ought to get out of this place more!"

"Perhaps. And, frankly, it seems to me that it's about time you came in a little more. Aren't you through with your vacation yet?"

"I don't get you."

"You've been out of college six weeks now. I expected you back the first of the month."

"So? Why?"

"To help me here."

"I'm afraid I wouldn't be much help, Dad," the boy replied. "Besides—well, I've a bit of news for you."

HINCKLEY waited without any greats display of interest. He waited because as soon as the youngster was through talking trivialities he meant to take advantage of his presence to talk a little sense. He had been waiting for just this opportunity since June, and had been more than once on the point of sending for him. Only the protests of Alice that Sam, after his college work, needed rest had prevented him.

Nobody, however, could look at the lad now and pretend he needed any further rest. Tanned, hard as nails, with the flush of perfect health coloring his cheeks, Hinckley, Junior was fit if ever a man was.

"Dad" said the boy, flushing a little, "I am going to get married."

Hinckley, who had been leaning back in his desk chair, snapped forward. "What's that?" he demanded.

"Surprised? Well, honestly, I'm surprised myself. I hadn't thought of it till a few days ago. It came all of a sudden."

"You mean," said Hinckley slowly, "you mean you've got into some sort of scrape?"

Hinckley, Junior, appeared puzzled a moment. Then his face hardened. He replied not as a son to a father, but as man to man: "You ought to know me better than that."

"Then what the devil are you talking about?" demanded Hinckley.

"I asked Doris Baker to marry me. She consented. That's all there is to it."

"You—you've spoken to Baker about this?"

"Right. He was good enough to offer no objections."

"No objections," repeated Hinckley with a queer tight strain in his throat. "And yet you aren't six weeks out of college, never earned a penny in your life, and haven't a nickel to your name."

"Say that again," the son demanded.

"Sit down," ordered Hinckley, waving the boy to a chair. For a moment Sam hesitated and then obeyed. He obeyed because he realized there was something here he did not yet understand and that it behooved him to understand before it was too late. The father hitched forward, gripping the chair arms with his tight hands.

"I said," he began, "I said that you've never earned a penny in your life. Isn't that correct?"

"Yes," admitted Sam.

"And I said you didn't have a nickel to your name. Isn't that correct too?"

"Yes."

"But on top of that you've the nerve to come to me to say that you propose marrying."

The boy held on to himself. That's where his football training came in. Yet this was as direct a blow as he had ever received.

"When you put it that way," he returned, "it—it does look a bit queer."

"What other way is there of putting it?" demanded Hinckley.

Sam met his father's eyes. It was Hinckley *versus* Hinckley.

"We may disagree, but there's no sense in disagreeing until we understand each other. I've never considered the money end because—frankly, I thought you had enough for both of us."

"You—you what?" choked Hinckley.

"You *have* made money, haven't you?"

"Yes," answered Hinckley. "I've made money. For twenty years I've done nothing else. I've sweat blood for it."

"I know that, Dad," cut in Sam. "I know it, and I'd like to have seen you quit long ago. But you didn't and you wouldn't, and I don't suppose you will now."

"Quit? Why *should* I quit?"

"Because you've enough. Everybody seems to think you're worth over a million."

"I am," snapped Hinckley. "What of it?"

"Seems as though that ought to be enough for us all to worry along on. Besides, I suppose the business itself is worth something."

"Good God!" choked Hinckley.

"Sell out and retire," continued Sam. "That's the reasonable thing. What I intended myself was to build a little house out of town near a good golf course—Doris likes golf—and do some writing. I've a bit of talent for that sort of thing, and have a notion I might accomplish something worth while. Anyhow it's worth trying. Why can't you build two houses and join us? Mother would like that and Doris would teach you both golf. She isn't any star, but she's a darned good sport. Gad, Dad, you'd like her!"

HINCKLEY heard. The boy spoke very distinctly and his words were plain and direct. That was the curse of this situation. The boy was so clear that it was impossible to misunderstand him. Nor was he saying these things in the heat of passion, but calmly and deliberately and in full possession of his senses. He spoke, too, confidently—as though actually he saw nothing preposterous in these fantastic suggestions.

This was the son upon whom he had banked—the son upon whom he had relied to carry on the business and piece out his own life! He had figured it in detail to himself—Sam to go into the factory for a year at the bench and then to work up to overseer and superintendent, with perhaps a year or so on the road. In five years, if he worked hard, the boy ought to be ready for the executive staff and in another five years able to stand alone. Then with thirty or forty years still before him the only limit to the Hinckley fortune would be the boy's capacity.

For of course this fortune was coming to his son in the end. In fact Hinckley had already made his will leaving his wife, in case of her survival, a generous annuity, but giving principal and business to Sam. And now the boy was presuming to anticipate this!

That was it. He was acting as though the money were already his. This was no more, to be sure, than he had been encouraged as a boy to do, but he was no longer a child. He was now of age. At twenty-two Hinckley had already been at work four years and he had been at work ever since and intended to work a good many years longer. Yet this son of his, for whom he had made this fortune, talked of marrying and building houses and of writing—a waste of time at best—before he had earned a penny!

Hinckley made his feet at this point. His face was white and his jaw set.

"Look here, my boy," he exploded, "what you seem to forget is that this money is mine—still mine. And furthermore it's going to stay mine as long as I live. I don't approve of your marrying until you've earned the right to marry. If you want to earn that right you turn up at the factory with a pair of blue overalls to-morrow morning and ask for Malloney. He'll give you a job and if you make good you'll get a better one in time, and later a still better one. It's up to you and it's up to you from this time on. Do you get that?"

Everything considered, Sam remained remarkably cool—dangerously cool.

"Why, yes," he answered. "That seems definite enough. Only—well what the deuce are you going to do with all your money?"

"That's my business."

"You're serious?"

"Good God, do you dispute it?"

"No," answered the boy. "Only I want to know just where my responsibility ends."

"It begins and ends with you."

"Then," said Hinckley, Junior, "that much is settled. But frankly, Dad, I think you're making a mistake. I'll look for a job to-morrow—only don't expect me at the factory. If I am going to earn my own living I'll do it my own way. And one thing more. I want to cut out the future. I have a hunch it will help me to work better. So if you've mentioned me at all in your will ——"

"That again is my business," Hinckley reminded the boy.

"Not altogether. It's my business to be sure of where I stand. And to make sure I'll put it to you straight—I won't accept one red penny of anything you may consider leaving me."

"You're full of brilliant ideas this afternoon," smiled Hinckley grimly. "As I understand it, what you propose to do is to disinherit me."

"At any rate I won't have your money hanging like a club over my head," answered Junior. "You've made it yours to-day and now you can keep it yours. So help me God, I'll give away every dollar of anything you do leave me either directly or indirectly."

"Perhaps you'd better go now," gasped Hinckley. "You've said enough for one day."

IV

HINCKLEY, Junior, secured a job on the reportorial staff of a New York newspaper at a salary of thirty-five dollars a week and moved from home into a five-dollar-a-week room. His mother took to

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heart his leaving, but Hinckley was rather glad.

"The sooner the cub learns his lesson, the better," he declared. "He'll get enough of that in a couple of months."

So Junior did, but his next move was not to come back home, but to marry. The boy put the situation squarely up to Doris and then to Baker.

"I'm on my own," he informed them. "Not only now but for the rest of my life. I told Dad I wouldn't touch a cent of his money and I mean it. It's the only decent thing I could do after the stand he took. Of course if this makes a difference——"

"What does Doris say?" questioned Baker.

"She's game," answered Sam. "I never had any doubt about that, only I don't know that you'll feel she has any right to be game."

"I have a notion," smiled Baker, "I have a notion that she's game enough so that what I might think wouldn't change her."

"Of course we can get along," said Sam. "It may be kind of hard sledding at first, but we'll pull through."

"I believe you," answered Baker. "So I'll just let Doris and you settle matters for yourselves."

They had a quiet wedding at the Baker home. Hinckley came because Alice made him. He came with a first-class grouch, but somehow Doris got hold of him during the reception and carried him off secretly to a nook in the hall behind some palms. No one saw her do it and for a while there was more or less excitement in a search for the bride.

"Daddy Hinckley," she said to him, "I am now your daughter."

"Well?" he answered none too graciously.

"Are you sorry?"

"I—I don't think either of you had any business to marry," he declared.

"But we *are* married."

"Yes," Hinckley was forced to admit.

He would have given ten thousand dollars to have got out of that corner Never had he been in a position where he felt money was of so little service to him. It was not very warm there, but he felt the perspiration starting from his forehead.

"We *are* married, so Sam is my husband and you are my daddy-in-law and I'm your daughter. That ought to make all of us sort of friends, oughtn't it?"

"Yes."

"Have you kissed the bride yet?"

Hinckley had not. It was a humiliating confession.

"Well then?" she continued, lifting her head and looking him fair in the eyes. His eyes were a lot like Sam's.

Hinckley stooped over the young lips and brushed them—did so with a thrill of pride he could not control; did so almost tenderly. For after all this was Sam's bride—his son's bride. And she was as beautiful as Alice had been.

"You'll be as good friends as you can with me?" she pleaded, her face flushed.

"As good friends as Sam will let me be," he choked.

That night Hinckley made out a check for one thousand dollars and sent it to Doris as a wedding-present. He did it on the impulse of the moment; as the normal, natural, decent thing to do. But it left him feeling just about one thousand per cent. better in his own mind.

He had never thought much about having a daughter—certainly not of securing one in any such fashion as this—but that week the two were away on their honeymoon, he found himself going back in his mind again and again to the episode behind the palms, and every time with a tingle of satisfaction.

He did not hear from them until they returned to New York and then he received at his office a letter from each. Her letter contained the check and read:

DEAR DADDY HINCKLEY:

It was good of you to think of me in this way and yet—oh, I wish you hadn't. It makes me fear that you thought I was insincere—was just wheedling. Then I feel like hanging my head in shame. It was just your good will I wanted—nothing more.

If I gained a little of that and your present was an expression of this, then I don't like to run the risk of losing that precious gain by returning your gift. But I am back of Sam with both feet. He wants to stand alone and I want him to. He is wonderful and is going to do wonderful things and I know that some day you are going to be very, very proud of him even if you aren't of

Your loving daughter,

DORIS.

Hinckley stared first at the letter and then at the check. Then he ran a finger around inside his collar to loosen it. He felt as though some one had been choking him. With unsteady hand he picked up the boy's letter and read as follows:

DEAR DAD:

Of course Doris is returning the check. She couldn't do anything else because she knows all about my talk with you. But I hope you'll show her that you haven't any hard feelings by coming around to see us. We'll be settled in another week in our little apartment, but you're welcome any time. Only if you come too soon, I'll give you fair warning, she'll set you to work hanging pictures and moving furniture. But maybe that will do you good. You need a little exercise.

Yours,

SAM.

Hinckley's secretary came in at this point with a list of things a foot long demanding immediate attention, but Hinckley ordered him out.

"Bannington is waiting to see you, sir," ventured the secretary.

"He can keep on waiting or go—just

Everything considered, Sam remained cool, dangerously cool.

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as he damn pleases," barked Hinckley.

"Yes, sir," Jones hastily agreed and closed the door behind him.

The whole business world could wait or go on just as it pleased, for all Hinckley cared at this moment. Which was not at all like Hinckley because it is not so that a man can successfully conduct a business. In a sense, to be sure, this matter of the returned check was business. Never before had he had a check so dishonored. Yet often he had settled in a few moments matters involving much larger figures.

This time, however, he felt completely baffled. His problems before had been concerned not with how to give money away, but with how to take it in.

HINCKLEY rose and began to pace his office. He had had a lot of fun this last week out of that thousand-dollar check. How much, he was just beginning to realize. Now, at the moment he had expected through her letter to receive something in the nature of an extra dividend, he found himself cheated of the whole. That was the fault of the boy.

Hinckley's face grew livid and he clutched at the wall for support. This was the second or third time lately this had happened. He was all right again in a moment, but he was reminded of what the specialist had told him.

"Avoid all violent emotions," he had been advised.

Hinckley returned to his desk and sat down wearily. The thing about the present situation that he could not understand was that control of it seemed to have passed out of his hands into the hands of the boy. Yet he was still in command of his fortune—the matter of a million and a half dollars. That money stood for power.

In the past ten years he had been able to make or break any man in his employ. He had seen young fellows turn white at threat of discharge. But here was his son, with more at stake in the business than any one else, snapping his fingers at him. Good Lord! That justified him in disinheriting the young cub.

Once more the blood started to Hinckley's face and it was necessary for him to take a cigar from his pocket and concentrate a moment on the detail of lighting it evenly. He recalled having been about ready to use this threat of disinheritance when Sam had anticipated him. The boy had said:

"I won't accept one red penny of anything you may consider leaving me. So help me God, I'll give away every dollar of anything you do leave me either directly or indirectly."

In fact it was he, the father, who had been disinherited!

Hinckley at the time had been inclined to smile at this preposterous statement. He was inclined to smile at it now—when his eyes fell again upon the check on his desk; the check which until a few moments ago he had thought as good as a thousand-dollar bank-note but which as it lay there was no more than a worthless strip of light-green paper.

It was signed, to be sure, with his bold, powerful signature, "Samuel Hinckley," but until it was indorsed with the name of the payee—however insignificant that name might be in itself—the transaction was not completed. The gift without the giver was bare, as the poet sang, but it was equally true that a gift without the recipient was bare.

Hinckley felt again beneath his collar that same tightening sensation he had experienced when he read those two letters accompanying the returned check. It was as though some one had him by the throat. He tried to squirm away from the grip by pacing his floor, but the fingers held firm.

Hinckley knew himself well enough to know his boy—to the extent anyway that he believed Sam sincere. He had not spoken idly. And he had shown that he had the courage of his convictions. If, however, Junior persisted in this last stand, if he held as stubbornly to it as he was likely to do, why then it might be literally true that Hinckley would find himself disinherited—stripped of the fortune he had worked so hard to accumulate.

For there was one way and only one way in which Hinckley could receive any return from his money and that was through this son. Ten per cent. of what he possessed would satisfy every want of both himself and his wife. That left ninety per cent. as valueless as so much light-green paper, as far as he was concerned. He could not use it now; he could not look forward to any use his son might make of it after he was dead; he could not even revenge himself by cutting the boy off in his will. It was as though his gold had been suddenly turned to dross.

Once again his secretary ventured to intrude.

"Mr. Bannington says it is very important for him to see you at once about the Hudson contract."

"He is mistaken," answered Hinckley dully. "It is not at all important."

V

IN THE days following, Hinckley actually saw more of his son than he had at any time during the preceding ten years. Sam was making good in his new work, and whenever his assignments took him anywhere in the vicinity of his father's office he always made it a point to drop in for a chat. If at first Hinckley was embarrassed, this soon wore off before the boy's fine enthusiasm and sincere good nature. Junior was having the time of his young life both at home and abroad. It was his first intimate, independent contact with the world and he thrilled with the adventure of it.

"It's great stuff, Dad!" he exclaimed. "And the best of it is I'm accumulating no end of material for some real writing I mean to do as soon as I get on my feet."

"What do you mean by getting on your feet?" inquired Hinckley.

"Of course I'm new at the game and it takes all my time now to earn my salary. But later—well, I ought to be better situated."

This was the sort of thing that used to cut Hinckley like a whip-lash. Junior did not mean it so and that only made it worse. But it was monstrous that this son of his, blood of his blood, flesh of his flesh, should put off into the dim future the opportunity for doing his best work because of lack of money—and he, the father, with so much idle money which was just so much worthless money.

It did not matter that to him the work seemed valueless. It was evident enough that to the boy it meant the expression of the best that was in him. Then he should have the privilege of bringing it out.

Yet when Hinckley made any suggestion, however indirectly, that this was an unnecessary handicap which Junior was imposing on himself, he saw the boy's face set. That was the one thing and the only thing Sam refused to discuss with him. It recalled to Hinckley those nightmares he used to suffer when Junior was a child, the lad in some grave danger and he bound hand and foot, helpless to go to the rescue.

Hinckley found himself going back more and more to those early days—even to the hours when in the dark the weak voice used to sob for him and reach out tiny arms as he neared and then lay a warm head against his shoulder with a murmured "Daddy."

It was the dependence of the child, his absolute trust and confidence, that used to make Hinckley swell with pride—that even made him feel a little bit like God.

LOOKING back now—looking back twenty-three years—it was still sweet to him. Only it left him aching; it left him craving; it left him, at times, with his head bowed on his office desk.

Hinckley grew older in the next six months than he had in the previous six years. It was Alice who called Sam's attention to this.

"I'm worried," she said.

"The trouble is he's sticking too close to that confounded business!" exclaimed Junior.

"Can't you talk to him? If he would only sell it!"

"I'm afraid I haven't much influence with him, but I'll see what I can do," he agreed.

Sam brought his wife up to the house that evening, and after dinner saw his father in the library.

"Dad," he began. "I don't mean to butt into your affairs but, honest, it's time you quit. Why don't you sell out?"

Hinckley did not go up in the air, as the boy expected. For a moment he studied his son with eyes grown eager.

"What shall I do if I quit?" he asked finally.

"Enjoy yourself. Get a house in the country and settle down. I know a nice place—Doris and I looked at it once. Buy it and take Mother down there and let her make a garden. And you can learn to play golf."

Hinckley leaned forward.

"You'd join us?" he ventured unsteadily.

"Lord, I'd like to," returned Junior. "But I can't afford that sort of thing yet. Perhaps when I'm your age——"

Hinckley uttered a cry. "Don't wait—until then," he pleaded. "It will be too late then."

"I'll only be fifty-three," returned Junior.

Hinckley's voice broke. "I—I don't mean too late for you."

"But your time is now," argued Junior. "You have ahead of you all the years in which I'll be catching up."

"I have them for what?" trembled Hinckley.

"To enjoy yourself in. You've earned the right."

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"What is the right without the opportunity?" choked Hinckley. "God, Sam, haven't you punished me enough? I—I can't stand much more."

It was he now, holding out his arms in the dark to the child who used to hold out his arms to him.

The young man stepped nearer. He placed his hand on his father's shoulder.

"Dad," he faltered, "I guess there's something here we're a bit mixed up on. I haven't been trying to hurt you."

"You've stripped me clean. You've left me bankrupt."

"You mean you've lost your money?" exclaimed Sam. "Why, that isn't anything, Dad. I'm not earning much, but I guess we can stretch it out to cover the four of us. Only I don't see exactly how you blame me."

Hinckley met his son's eyes. "Then," he said hopefully, "you'll share with me?"

"As long as I have a cent in the world and you know it, Dad."

"No, not that. Will you share mine?"

Sam stepped back with a puzzled frown. Hinckley rose and seized his arm—held him as though fearful he might leave.

"Can't you see yet?" he cried piteously. "You ask me to live and refuse me the only source of life I have left. You ask me to enjoy and cut me off from my only source of enjoyment. I said I was bankrupt. I am. I still have my money but I am as bankrupt as though I were dead. Mother and I are able to use so little—just enough to keep alive. Even that is worth while only because of you."

Hinckley broke down for a moment, but he pulled himself together again.

"Sam," he trembled on, "I'm not asking you to accept this money; I'm just asking you to give Mother and me a chance to spend it on ourselves. There's only one way we can do it and that is through you and Doris. A garden for Mother without a garden for you would be no garden at all. And how can I sell my business unless you help me? To sell means to get something in return and without you I'd be getting nothing—nothing. So you see I'm not asking you to take anything. I'm asking you to give. I come to you as a beggar—an old beggar."

Hinckley released his grip on the young man's arm. He tottered. "An old beggar—a bit unsteady on his legs," he murmured.

It recalled to Hinckley those nightmares he used to suffer when Junior was a child, the lad in some grave danger and he helpless to rescue.

"You mustn't talk like that," broke in Junior. "Lord A'mighty! You mustn't act like a great-grandfather before you're a grandfather."

Hinckley straightened his shoulders. He raised questioning eyes.

"You mean——"

"It ought to be soon now—if all goes well. So you see you may not need either Doris or me after that."

"Need you? I'll need you all three. Only——"

Hinckley's trembling fingers fumbled in his waistcoat pocket. He drew out a strip of light-green paper—the same strip which had lain upon his desk. He held it out to his son.

"You'll let this be a gift from—from the baby to me?"

Junior hesitated only a second. Then he took it. "I want him to be a good sport—that baby of mine," he said.

The Old Man

By Oscar C. Williams

A SHADOW lost in autumn shadows kind,
He sits and dreams the dreams that old men dream;
His dusk-filled window frames a lamp-post's gleam
Beneath which lads their lasses seek and find.
But he—he does not see; his rusted mind
Is rummaging among a pile of old
And worn-out memories, thinned threads of gold,
All that was his, ere sight had made him blind.

He does not see the miracle of Youth
Wring from the autumn, yearning of the spring,
Wrench from the dusk the dawn's wild coloring—
He dreams of dead desire and costly truth. . . .
Outside Youth's laughter peals its many bells. . . .
Blind eyes are blind even to miracles!

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The Colyumists' Confessional

IX. Luke McLuke, *by Himself*

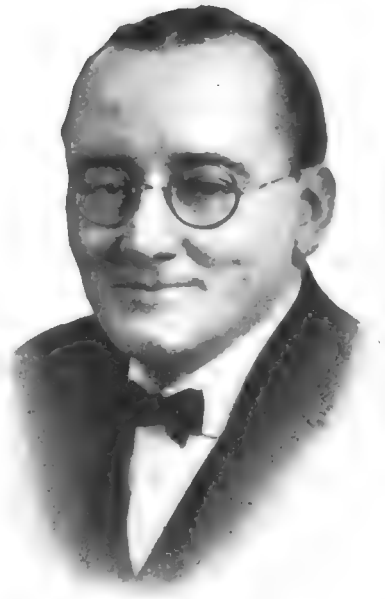
THE editor of EVERYBODY'S wants to know why Luke McLuke became a column conductor. I have a whole lot of enemies who want to know the same thing. With the world clamoring for hod-carriers, sewer-diggers and livery-stable chambermaids, they can not understand why on earth I got so far out of my line. But the fact of the matter is that I became a column conductor for the same reason that a man becomes a hobo—to avoid work. And, like the man who becomes a hobo to avoid work, I find that I have to work ten times as hard in order to keep from working.

After twenty years of a steady grind as a reporter, a desk man, a feature writer and handy man around newspaper offices, I decided about ten years ago that I would become a professional humorist and turn out a daily column. It looked mighty easy then. Nothing to do but sit down all day and write what you doggone pleased, and when you were through, you were through. But that was ten years ago. Would that I had been content to remain a poor, but honest, reporter with nothing to do but cover assignments from noon until 4 A. M!

> Why does the poor man look so mad?
> Why is his face so drawn and solemn?
> He is a funny man, my lad,
> He's getting up to-morrow's column.

But, before we proceed, I would like to state that I am more of a column Engineer than a column Conductor. Unlike many others, I have never permitted the useful Contributor to do the bulk of the work. He may sneak in with a filler now and then, for which he receives credit, but nearly everything in my column is written by myself, and is protected by a daily copyright. And, unlike other column conductors, I write a column every day in the year, and I have kept this up for ten years. Rain or shine, sick or well, I have missed very few days. In fact, I have written the column for weeks at a time while confined to my bed with rheumatism and other ailments. And, strangely enough, readers have congratulated me on the general excellence of the column when it was written in pain and suffering, and some have informed me that it was even better than when I was enjoying good health.

FOR four years I wrote my column for four individuals and forgot that I had other readers. These four were a bed-fast man with a broken spine; a hopeless consumptive in the Ohio State Hospital; a man who was slowly dying with cancer of the stomach in French Lick, Indiana, and a convict in the Atlanta Penitentiary. These four men looked forward to my column every day as a small boy does to a picnic. They told me that I made life brighter for them and brought them good cheer. And, no matter how I felt, I wrote my



Luke McLuke

column every day rather than bring a day of disappointment to them. All four have passed away, but I feel better in having lightened their burdens while they were here.

Strangely enough, writing a column a day does not become a grind. When a really good idea hits you, it is a pleasure to turn it into a joke or a rime or a squib. I guess I do more chuckling over my efforts than do my readers. I can visualize my audience, and I can see some of them grin with me, while others painfully search for the point. I realize that many of my Luke McLuke paragraphs are going to offend my congregation, yet I know that these same paragraphs are going to make a big hit with another portion of the congregation. It is mighty hard to do this kind of work and not make enemies while you are making friends.

I have never taken the writing of a column as a serious task. Perhaps that is why I look and feel so young. It is a pleasure to believe that a million people look to you to turn their frowns into grins. It is a labor of love to send the gospel of good cheer into many homes; but the moment a column conductor takes himself seriously and lets his head get swelled, old age seeps into his work and he is a goner.

A column conductor must be very human. He must realize that his readers are very human. You do not have to reprint classics to hold your audience. The homely little commonplace affairs of our daily life, given a humorous twist, are remembered and quoted by your readers when what you consider your masterpieces have been forgotten. And your audience is a critical one. Americans read so much nowadays that they demand variety and originality in a column conductor. It consequently behooves a column conductor to do a lot of reading and keep right up to the moment in everything. I read a dozen good newspapers every day and not less than thirty magazines a month.

I do not know where other column conductors get their ideas. I'll frankly admit that I get mine by observing other people. I seldom take a street-car ride that isn't good for four or five ideas. Every man and woman you see on the street has some peculiarity if you will only look for it. Another good method is to study your own weaknesses and relate them in a semi-humorous way, and you are certain to hit a thousand other men right square on the nose. I have often scourged myself for a failing and received a dozen indignant letters from absolute strangers telling me to mind my own business and keep my nose out of their affairs. The same paragraph will bring chuckles from fifty other correspondents who claim that the glove fits friends of theirs. So, after writing a paragraph, you can't tell whether a caller comes to congratulate you or kill you.

COLUMN conducting is getting to be a great indoor sport. Column conductors spring up like weeds all over the country. Less than a dozen have survived for five years, and only a half-dozen have been in the game as long as Luke McLuke. With no credit to myself, it is remarkable how uniformly readable these half-dozen have managed to keep their columns. In getting up a column you can't wait for a day or a week for inspiration to settle on your shoulder. The column must be gotten out immediately, and you must force ideas. The idea will drift in on you if you have enough patience. But it takes a heap of patience. I often sit at a typewriter for two hours without striking a key, sorting over and rejecting ideas that come and go. There are other days when ideas simply flow through your finger tips. But, strangely enough, I have found it to be a fact that the column that is easiest to write does not attract as much favorable comment as does the column that keeps you yawning and sweating for five hours before you complete it.

It has been my pleasure on several occasions to sit behind readers who were going over my column in street-cars and railroad trains. It takes some of the swelling out of your head to overhear the opinion that your wife writes the column—that you are a woman, not a man—

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that you are an erratic, drunken genius—and that it is too bad you are a hopeless drug-fiend.

I have an idea that I inherited my sense of humor. My father was a jovial Scotchman who dearly loved a pun, and my mother was born in Ireland and was noted for her wit and repartee. As a boy I was a great reader. As a youth I was the most solemn student imaginable. I wrote nothing but serious stuff until I was about twenty-three years old. This serious stuff included two volumes of alleged poems and one volume of near essays. At college I took my major in philosophy. Always a dreamer, I could not make up my mind what to do with myself when I quit school.

One day I packed my belongings and took the Fall River boat to New York. That was thirty years ago. I had never written a line for a newspaper in my life, but I lied to the city editor of the *Sun* and got a job doing general assignments. I have worked on newspapers ever since—thirteen of them. I have also owned two weekly newspapers. For more than a year I hoboed around the country. I have been around the world on cushions or cinders, in cabin or coal hole, according to luck, and I have found my varied experiences invaluable in conducting a column.

Nearly a quarter of a century ago I married and settled down. Matrimony seemed to broaden me and I believe that every column conductor should be a married man. Marriage is no joke, but I have made it the butt of my jokes for ten years. In that time I have written some three thousand five hundred "Paw Knows Everything" jokes in which Paw's replies to Willie regarding matrimonial affairs have caused Maw to chastise poor Willie. Here is a sample:

Willie—Paw, what is a monolog?

Paw—A monolog is a conversation between a man and his wife, my son.

Maw—Willie, you get to bed!

I have always been an optimist. The Lord blessed me with a cheerful disposition. So, with an ability to see a joke in a funeral on a rainy day, a natural instinct for punning, an ability to rime anything and everything, a complete stock of Joe Miller jokes, a knowledge of human nature, and a never-ending source of material discovered in my own married life, I find it easy to be a column conductor.

My column was a success from the beginning. In a few years "Bits of Byplay" had spread like the "flu" all over the Middle West. Then the Cincinnati *Enquirer* decided to syndicate the column. To-day I am writing the column for more than fifty daily newspapers scattered over thirty states, and I also have the Winnipeg *Free Press* and the Calgary *Albertan* in Canada.

I have found that it isn't a bit harder to amuse my present audience of more than five million readers per day than it was to hold up a lone individual in the old days and pour my alleged funny stuff into his ear. It is easy to be funny when you have a reputation as a funny man. Luke McLuke is notorious for his sarcasm, for his iconoclasm and for his ability to express in cold type just the very thought the reader had in his mind but was afraid to express. Therefore, even when the rime or the joke or the epigram does not amount to much, the reader thinks it must be clever because Luke McLuke wrote it, and the reader proceeds to find something funny in it.

To write the daily column I need about thirty to forty original ideas. Now you can figure out for yourself what you are up against every day in the year if you want to conduct a column like "Bits of Byplay." It isn't hard after you get the ideas. It is like keeping your head under water. The first two hours are the hardest; after that you get used to it.

In ten years I have written more than twenty thousand alleged jokes, more than twenty thousand original rimes and more than fifty thousand chunks of homely philosophy on men, women, matrimony and human nature in general. It was really these paragraphs that gave Luke McLuke any fame he may possess. Strangely enough, they are not nearly as hard to write as the rest of the column. Just write about yourself, and do not spare yourself, and you'll make sixty other men think that you are writing about them.

I am nearing my fifty-fourth birthday. Have never had but the one wife, and hope to have her for a while longer. I have four husky children, all grown. I get up at noon every day and go to bed at 5 A. M. just to be stubborn. I could just as well go to bed and get up like other people. I think up my ideas during the night and put them on the typewriter in the afternoon. I love Corn Fed girls and hate prohibition.

I have been asked by the editor of EVERYBODY'S to select my best stuff for the preceding year. Being a modest lit-tle pee-rare-ey flower, I can thruthfully say that it would take twelve issues of EVERYBODY'S to hold all of my best stuff during the past year. It is all good. It is so uniformly good every day that I can't select the "best"; in other words, there ain't no best.

Here are some "Luke McLuke Says" paragraphs from this morning's column. They'll give you an idea of the general run.

A girl gets so tired of spending her evenings alone that she gets married and continues to spend her evenings alone.

The reason why a Corn Fed girl can't run as fast as a slim Princess is because the more waist the less speed.

When he is listening to her Birdlike Voice during the Engagement he never dreams that she will talk like a Parrot after they are married.

A fifteen-year-old girl can't get her skirts long enough. A twenty-five-year-old girl can't get them short enough.

Cheer up! Scientists tell us that the sun will cool off entirely just 90,000,000 years from now and it will be so cold that your thirst won't bother you a bit.

It isn't a bit of trouble to break yourself of the smoking habit. All you have to do is let your wife buy your cigars for you.

You may not believe it. But Light Housekeeping is responsible for some mighty heavy cooking.

The world is growing better. We can remember when a man was regarded as a Dude if he had creases in his pants.

Without fear of losing a cent we would like to bet any married man that he can't remember a word the Preacher said when he was being married.

The woman who married for a Home sometimes has six fights a week with her husband because he won't take her out for her meals.

OUR OWN POPULAR SONGS

The Heartless Employer

An honest working girl one day went out to hunt a job.
She was a union worker, and she knew her rights, by gob!
She drove up to a factory in her jeweled limousine,
And walked into the office with the manners of a queen.
The boss came out to meet her, and he bowed and said: "Your Grace,
We need a girl right now and hope that you'll accept the place.
Our factory's bright and sunny, and we serve a noon meal free,
And we'll supply a boudoir and a maid, too, I'll agree.
The work is light, and you need work just six short hours per day,
And when you're here a month you'll get another raise in pay.
Please take the job, Your Highness, help us out, and have a heart!'
But all that we can pay is ninety bucks per week to start!"
The poor girl heard the awful news, then staggered to the door,
The shock had quite unnerved her, and she fell down on the floor.
They called a doctor and he worked on her for half a day,
And then she faced that heartless boss, and these words she did say:

CHORUS:

"I may be but a working girl, but I am proud and free!
And them starvation wages, sir, does not appeal to me!
And Heaven will protect me, and will curse the stingy reek,
Who'd ask a decent girl to work for Ninety Bucks a week."

THE LIMIT

"Smith is a chronic dyspeptic, isn't he?" remarked Brown.

"Yes," agreed Jones. "He believes that the hole is the best part of the doughnut."

DOWN IN THE MOUTH

"Though you're down in the mouth," said Bill Bonah,
"Cheer up, do not dwell on your plight;
You should think of the case of old Jonah.
Remember, he came out all right."

OH!

Belshazzar was asked why he failed to heed the handwriting on the wall.

"I have always made it a rule to ignore anonymous communications," was his reply.

PAW KNOWS EVERYTHING

Willie—Paw, how old would a person be who was born in 1893?

Paw—That depends on whether the person is a man or a woman, my son.

In the October number "B. L. T." of the Chicago* Tribune, *will appear at this Confessional.

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"His Wonders to Perform"

By Lewis R. Freeman

This gay story of the South Seas—Mr. Freeman's first appearance in EVERYBODY'S—is the residue of one of those attacks of wanderlust which send him off now and then on roves around the world and into strange corners thereof, far from the California ranch where the more uninteresting part of his time is spent. Mr. Freeman is planning soon, by way of a little home diversion, to do the Grand Cañon in a row-boat, and a few other things like that; so for the sake of your future entertainment we're going to keep an eye on him.

The king was shot like a rocket against the ceiling.

WE HAD heard of the Honorable "Slope" Carew—pearler, "blackbirder," yachtsman and scion of a noble British family—at every port we had touched in the South Pacific, but it was not our fortune to meet him until after our arrival at Suva. There he was one of our first callers, and it chanced that he, with the captain of H.M.S. *Clio* and two or three other Englishmen, was off on the yacht for dinner the night a bottle of champagne exploded prematurely in the hands of our Chinese steward, and kicked him backward down the cabin stairs.

"Makes it seem like the old days on the *Aphrodite*," said Carew. "You heard of the *Aphrodite* in Tahiti, didn't you, and of how her cargo of 'Hum's Extra Spry' helped my old pal, the Reverend Horatio Loveworth, to convert Boraki and his nest of cutthroats on Makatea?"

We had indeed heard the story of the conversion of Boraki and his fellow pirates of Makatea, but never at better than third or fourth hand, and in versions so diametrically at variance that the chance to enjoy the account of one who had actually figured in that famous coup was too good to let slip.

We were dining on deck, and the story, begun over *avocados*, was continued after we adjourned with coffee and liqueurs to sofa-cushions or lounging-chairs in the cockpit. The tropic moon was dropping plummets of gold through the rigging, and, as he talked, Carew punctuated his well-turned sentences with frequent sips from the oft-replenished glass of cracked ice and absinthe on his chair arm. Just how much of the golden floss of the streaming moonlight and the verdant thread of the trickling absinthe were twisted into the yarn he spun probably Carew himself could not have told.

"It is a long story if I go back to the beginning, as I shall have to if you are to understand all that happened," said Carew musingly; "for from first to last the yarn revolves, not around myself or the *Aphrodite* or Boraki, but around a special consignment of champagne to which we always referred, from the moment its true character began to be revealed, as 'Hum's Extra Spry.'

"It was shortly after the pater cut me off with a beggarly five hundred pounds a year, at the end of a series of escapades which had culminated with my wrecking his yacht on the coast of Morocco, that I found myself in San Francisco. I had sailed my own ninety-footer at Cowes on more than one occasion, so that I was only following the line of least resistance in applying for the billet of first mate, when I learned that Colonel Jack Spencer, the mining magnate, had converted a smart sealing schooner into a private yacht and was preparing to sail with a party of friends for the South Pacific.

"Spencer was rather taken with the idea of having a sprig of British nobility along, and from the first insisted on treating me more as a guest than as an under officer. This was how I chanced to be included with the skipper in an invitation to a farewell dinner given by Spencer to a number of San Francisco friends on the eve of our departure. Here I met the members of the yachting party, and, what is of more importance to my story, had my first experience of the potentialities of 'Hum's Extra Spry.'

"Perhaps it will serve to make the strange things which came to pass afterward more intelligible if I explain here what Spencer only became apprized of six months later through offering his New York wine agent a liberal reward for the information, namely, what put the power in the fancy-priced consignment of champagne which he had ordered especially for the South Pacific cruise.

"It appeared that one of the chemists of the great Hum winery at Rheims, in

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experimenting with a newly invented aerating powder, had used that mixture instead of the decolorizing solution in tapering off a twelve-dozen case order of California champagne that was being hurriedly prepared for reexport to America. Now normal champagne, in the making, exerts so strong a pressure upon the glass which confines it that an average of fully twenty per cent. of the bottles used are burst before the final stage is reached; while the aerating powder which was being tried out as a substitute for carbon-dioxid gas in making sparkling Burgundies and Sauternes was calculated to develop a ten-pounds-to-the-square-inch pressure on its own account.

"So it happened that every unit of the order in question, having in addition to its normal stock of bubbles those generated as a result of the accidental aeration, was more like a hand-grenade than a bottle of wine. Nine-tenths of the lot suffered total disintegration before it was ready to be shipped, and the remainder was only saved by being transferred to rubber-corked bottles of quarter-inch glass, all of the outsides of which were reinforced with a closely-woven mesh of gilded wire. Red enamel grape leaves were grilled into the gold foil of the cap, and the label, in addition to several lines of French attesting the purity of the contents, bore the English words 'Liquid Sunshine—Special,' in raised ivory letters.

"The two or three dozen surviving cases of this remarkable vintage were snapped up the moment they were clear of the customs by Spencer's New York agent, who rushed them on to San Francisco. All but two cases, which were kept out to serve at Spencer's farewell dinner, were sent aboard the yacht and stowed.

"I saw at once that the old chap was worried when I arrived the evening of the dinner, and before we went in he took me aside to ask if I knew anything regarding the handling of 'high-power' wine, as he termed it. It appeared that in the afternoon, while several bottles of the new wine were in the refrigerator undergoing a preliminary cooling, some one had dropped an ice-pick in among them and they had all gone off together.

"The frame of the box held, but the partitions gave way, wrecking beyond possibility of salvage two dozen ice-cream models of the *Aphrodite* floating in a sea of green jelly. The *Aphrodites* were replaced by some ready-made anchors which the caterer chanced to have on hand, but the endeavor to hasten the chilling of more champagne by the use of a whirligig freezer only resulted in the annihilation of that useful contrivance and the loss of another bottle of wine.

"THE contents of the first two bottles which the butler opened for dinner got away to the ceiling almost as fast as did the gilt-capped corks, and that worthy was about ready to give up in despair, when one of the caterer's men pointed the way to a solution of the immediate problem by setting the next bottle in a punch-bowl and capping it with an inverted soup-plate.

"The soup-plate was smashed to smithereens at the first trial, but the aluminum stew-pan which replaced it at the next attempt stood the shock and deflected the cork, cap and a considerable quantity of a restless yellow liquid to the bottom of the punchbowl. This liquid, by means of a funnel, was restored to its bottle, hastily muffling which in a napkin, to restrain a persistent catarrhal tendency of its nose, the flurried butler, fifteen minutes late, dashed into the dining-room with the first instalment of the anxiously-awaited 'Sunshine.'

"Now it is just possible that had the butler moved with his wonted glide of easy dignity nothing very much out of the ordinary would have happened, but the stiff, broken-kneed trot with which he tried to make up for lost time aroused the dormant energies of the hard-won contents of the bottle, with the result that it gathered itself together and made a fresh break for the open just as its warder was edging in for a gingerly pour at the glass of a pearly shouldered dowager who was sitting on Spencer's right.

"There was no inverted aluminum stew-pan to deflect the erupting 'Sunshine' this time, and as a consequence, it expended itself with one joyous 'whouf' upon the well-kept surfaces of the stately dame's right cheek and shoulder. Some little of it, tinged with rose and pearl, caromed off to extinguish a circle of pink candles on the table, but the most of it remained behind to trickle in little rose and pearl rivulets down the lady's neck. The unfortunate victim screamed lustily several times, dabbed wildly at the parts affected with a little yellow rag which suddenly appeared from nowhere, and then ran, sobbing, from the room.

"IN the meantime the butler's assistants had rounded him up another bottle of the elusive fluid, and when that functionary appeared again in the dining-room he might have been planting dynamite bombs, so carefully did he pick his way about, and so great was the expression of terror in his staring eyes. But he stuck gamely to his task and finally poured out the last of the 'Sunshine' that his improvised distillery was able to deliver without again interfering with the toilet of any of the guests.

"In all of this time not a soul was able to get a sip of the phantom liquid. The moment a trickle of it touched a glass it hissed like a moistened seidlitz powder, threw spray in the air and piled up a heap of bubbles which, quickly subsiding, left nothing behind but a drug-store smell and a damp circle of table-cloth. The sprightly brunette in her first season whom I had taken in came nearest to getting a drink, and her experience had a dampening effect upon the enthusiasm of the others.

"This maid was rash and impulsive, and partly by quickness of hand, partly by inhalation, she managed to deflect laterally a lungful of the pungent spray, which was ascending perpendicularly to bespangle with dewy drops what some one had just characterized in nautical parlance as her 'natty gaff topsail pompadour.' Her behavior for the next minute or two made the efforts of the plump dowager to stanch the flow of her complexion seem dignified by comparison. The dinner was finished up with a more manageable vintage, and next day the *Aphrodite* sailed without further requisition having been made upon her stores of 'Extra Spry.'

"All through the three weeks' cruise to Tahiti the restless bubbles in the thick, green bottles in the *Aphrodite's* starboard lockers elbowed each other as they swelled in the tropic heat, but it was not until the yacht was safely anchored in Papeete Harbor that another opportunity came for any of them to get beyond control. A call had been made on the French governor in the morning, and that dignitary, according to official etiquette, was returning the visit in company with his stately wife the afternoon of the same day.

"Doubtless you have had to go through the same thing. The trouble came while the hospitable Spencer was mixing a punch. Cold tea, maraschino, curaçao, burnt sugar and a lot of other stuff had already gone in as a base, quite enough, so the mixer thought, to dilute a bottle of his 'Extra Spry' to an exhilarant innocuousness.

"All might have gone well had the diluting been done upon scientific principles, but Spencer, whose knowledge of hydraulics appeared very rudimentary for a man who had made a fortune in placer mining, directed the Japanese steward to poke the nose of the bottle into the punch as soon as he started the cork. That obedient functionary approached the bowl from the side opposite to the one on which the governor and his wife were seated, and did exactly as directed.

"Although the time was but five in the afternoon, his Excellency was in the full evening dress prescribed for official calls—cocked-hat, claw-hammer coat and two feet of shirt front crossed with a strip of red, white and blue ribbon and a row and a half of medals. A hundredth of a second after the asthmatically wheezing nose of the bottle of 'Extra Spry' went over the edge of the bowl, his regalia was absorbing a good half of Spencer's partially-mixed punch, while the remainder bubbled and creamed over the expensive Parisian creation of his stately wife.

"A sailor, who had taken in the incident from the forward deck, lost control of himself and broke into a loud guffaw, in which he was promptly joined by several of his mates. This set two or three of the more irreverent of the members of Spencer's party going, and when the spasm of laughter had passed it was found that their Excellencies, in high dudgeon, had melted over the side and departed in their waiting cutter.

"The Jap was found at the foot of the cabin stairs with a bruise in the pit of his stomach which bade fair to confine him to the little French hospital for a fortnight. Tropical heat and the agitation of the tossing bosom of the South Pacific were conspiring to set on hair-trigger edge the latent energies of the 'Extra Spry,' and, though none suspected it, the insistent throbs of the imprisoned bubbles were the pulse-beats in the Hand of Fate.

"THE coldness of Tahiti officialdom after this incident, a squabble with his skipper, as well as incipient internal dissensions among the members of his too closely confined party, all conspired to make Spencer forego the remainder of the cruise he had planned; and within the next week or so they had all left for San Francisco or Auckland, leaving the *Aphrodite* in my hands to be sold to the highest bidder. At the end of a month I sold her to the local head of the Amalgamated Missionary, Bible and Tract Society, who eagerly embraced the opportunity to replace at a bargain figure the *Morning Star*, which the last hurricane

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had piled up, a hopeless wreck, upon the beach of Moorea. I was retained as skipper.

"The society had long been anxious to undertake some reclamation work in the Paumotos, and the possession of the *Aphrodite*—a vessel which, on account of the ease with which she was handled, could venture with comparative safety where the ordinary type of South Sea schooner dared not go—made it possible to attempt to realize this ambition for the first time.

"After a week of busy preparation we were ready to sail for Makatea; and when the missionary schooner, *Southern Cross*, glided out of the narrow crack in the reef which constitutes the entrance to Papeete harbor and headed off for the northeast, there was little to differentiate her from the saucy *Aphrodite* which had come bowling in over an almost identical course a month or so previously.

"The name and the house-flag had to be altered, of course, to suit the new character of the vessel, while embroidered silk peacocks and sunflowers on the coverlets were rather beyond the simple tastes of the Reverend Horatio Loveworth, who was in charge of the work in hand.

"The punch-bowl had been retained as a baptismal fount, the wines—including the 'Extra Spry'—for medicinal purposes, the fancy stores to be presented as a good-will offering to King Boraki of Makatea, and a gramophone, fortified with a big stack of new bass-drum-and-trombone records of popular hymns, as a music teacher to the expected converts. Loveworth's keen practicality had been the principal factor in his rapid rise to the most important position in the South Pacific missionary service.

"After two days of admirable behavior in baffling winds and treacherous currents, the schooner penetrated to the very heart of the stormy Paumotan Archipelago. Ahead loomed the black mass of Makatea, the half-coral, half-volcanic island of sinister reputation which was our destination, and between stretched ten miles of submerged reefs which the chart made no pretence of outlining.

"Ordering sail to be shortened and a man sent aloft, I was just preparing to begin 'feeling' our way in toward the darker blur that marked the probable entrance to the lagoon, when the mate's keen eyes descried a lone sail bearing rapidly down on us from landward. My glass revealed a large outrigger canoe which, driven by a fair wind and urged by the flashing paddles of its dozen or more occupants, was throwing foam over its bow, so swiftly was it sliding through the water.

"IN less than half an hour it had grated against the side of the schooner and the leader of the party, a magnificently proportioned fellow dressed only in a red *pareo* and a necklace of sharks' teeth, disdaining the ladder that was lowered for him, leapt lightly over the rail and, saluting the Reverend Horatio with a bow and a sweep of his *koui* fiber hat, announced himself to be King Boraki.

"Speaking in the Marquesan dialect, he said that Makatea had learned of the great missionary's intended visit through word that had come from Rangaroa; that Makatea was transported with joy at the honor that was being done it; that preparations for a fitting reception had been in progress for a week and were now complete; and finally, that he had come to pilot the ship of his distinguished visitor by a safe channel to the harbor, and to be the first of his people to receive a Christian blessing.

"'God bless you, my brother; ask the rest of our brothers to come aboard for prayer and refreshment,' ejaculated the Reverend Horatio fervently, and no sooner was the invitation issued than fifteen more red *pareos* and shark-tooth necklaces flashed over the rail, their wearers promptly ranging themselves in an orderly row behind the leader. An instant later, like puppets controlled by a single string, every man of them plumped down on his knees, crossed his arms on his breast and, with eyes devoutly raised at an angle that directed their gaze somewhere in the vicinity of the third row of reef points on the idly flapping mainsail, remained motionless.

"'Rehearsed, by Gawd!' muttered the mate, whose quick eye had caught Boraki's backhand signal. 'Oh, for a Maxim on the deckhouse!'

"'Oh, for the words to express my thanks for all that has happened and is going to happen this day!' prayed the Reverend Horatio, heeding naught but the fact that he was on the eve of the apparent fulfilment of a lifelong ambition. His prayer was brief but full of feeling, and when it was over he asked all hands to come below and have something to eat.

"Boraki brought his men to their feet with a wave of his hand, picked two of his chiefs to accompany him to the cabin with the missionary, and sent the others forward to feed and fraternize with the crew. Carried away by Loveworth's enthusiasm and confidence—the man was, and is, a born leader—the mate and I followed him and the guest of honor below.

"*Who* this Boraki was, beyond being the greatest rascal that ever terrorized the southeastern Pacific, nobody knew. *What* he was everybody could tell you, but those you asked usually tried to save time by telling you what he wasn't. By process of elimination you might then learn that he was a pirate, cutthroat, murderer, cannibal, robber and other things too numerous to mention; also, that each of his four hundred men in Makatea was all of these things to a greater or lesser degree, and that few of them had ever been apprehended or punished.

"Boraki himself was supposed to have a good deal of European blood in his veins, but of what nationality no one was sure.

"ALL that Boraki had said in his little speech when he boarded the *Southern Cross* was quite true, but not quite the whole truth. He did not state, for example, that the preparations for entertainment he referred to were to be in the form of endurance tests of walking on red-hot stones—the walking to be done by the visitors—and that possibly the red-hot stones might serve for another purpose by the time the supper hour came around.

"Nor did he state that the end of his volunteer piloting was to run the nose of the schooner into a soft sand bank in the middle of the passage, where canoe-loads of his men, coming from the lagoon ostensibly as life-savers, could take advantage of the confusion that was bound to follow the accident to enter into possession with a minimum of difficulty and risk. The schooner was to be left till the shifting of the sands at the turn of the tide would release her without injury. All of which, of course, we did not learn until later.

The impatient chief deftly opened the two at once by knocking their heads together.

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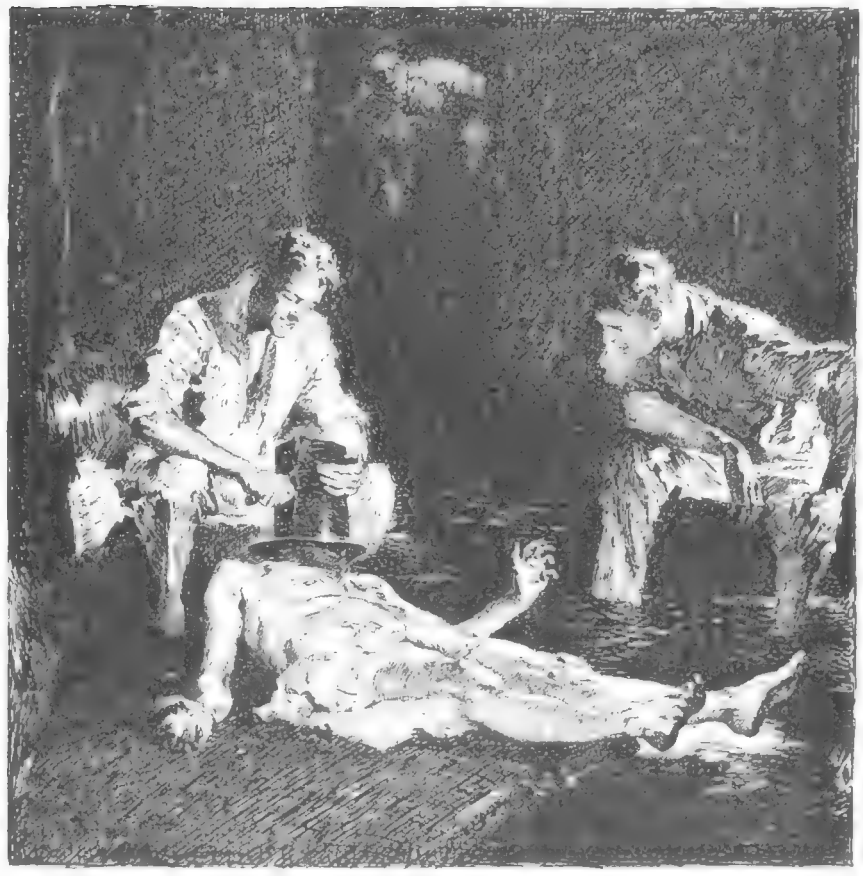
"This plan, good enough to have succeeded against a gunboat, had been evolved by the resourceful pirate in the expectation that the *Southern Cross* was coming with nothing less than a battery of rapid-fire guns and a detachment of French marines to see her through. When Boraki saw no quick-firers on the deck, no rifles or cutlases in the cabin, and not even a revolver or knife in the belts of the officers and crew, he perceived at once that there was no use risking the loss of the schooner by running her aground. His action was characteristic.

"The swift happenings of the next hour or so, as I was witness of them only in spots, I shall describe as the subsequent testimony of various of the participants—principally Boraki himself—showed them to have transpired.

"The distinctly mixed assemblage—Boraki, his two fellow cutthroats, Loveworth, the Australian first-mate, the half-caste second mate and myself—were seated round the cabin table. The steward had finished setting out a substantial little lunch, and the Reverend Horatio, having put one of his favorite records into the gramophone, was just winding it up when Boraki, without a word even to his companions, sprang lightly to the top of the cabin stairs and shouted to his men in Marquesan—a language that was understood by every one on the boat but myself—to tie up the sailors.

"Regaining the cabin floor at a single bound, he swung quickly with a mineral-water bottle on the heads of the first and second mates before either of those unfortunates was clear of his chair. My own head struck the cabin lamp a sharp blow as I lurched up out of my swivel-seat, and I was already half-dazed when Boraki's hard-swung bludgeon landed on my temple and dropped me like a log across the second mate.

"My last recollection was of one of the chiefs, muffled in Loveworth's long black coat-tails, trying to pinion the missionary's powerful legs, while the other brown rascal tore at the clerical stock in an effort to find an effective place to choke. I am indebted to Boraki for most of what followed.



The sensation was caused by the well-meant efforts of the first and second mates to remove the cast-iron hat from Boraki's head with the aid of a hammer, file and cold-chisel.

"GIVING each of our prostrate bodies a prod with his toe to assure himself that they were really as limp as they looked, Boraki perched on the corner of the table, and divided his time between eating chocolate wafers and giving his henchmen gratuitous tips on the way to hold down a struggling missionary. It was an even thing for a while, Boraki avers; the prettiest kind of a fight. But when the man who had stroked Oxford for three consecutive years finally threw off his assailants and made a break for the deck and fighting-room, the wily pirate felt that it was time to take a hand himself. Without descending from his comfortable cross-legged perch on the snowy table-cloth, he leaned forward as the fugitive dashed by and coolly planted his water-bottle just aft Loveworth's right ear, sending the stout-hearted missionary down alongside his officers in the shambles on the floor.

"Leaving his companions to tie up the prisoners, Boraki, munching at a mixed fistful of éclairs and canned salmon, sauntered forward to see all made snug in that part of the ship. Five minutes later, his head crowned with Loveworth's waste-basket—a cast-iron imitation of a top hat—and puffing contentedly at a Perfecto, he had taken his station at the wheel, and with the skill of a born sailor was guiding the *Southern Cross* in through the maze of shoals that surrounded his island.

"The run in was a dead beat to windward, the sun was pitilessly hot, and by the time the schooner's anchor went rattling down into the rose-coral floor of Makatea lagoon Boraki's kingly head, under its sixteen-pound iron crown, was buzzing like the trade-wind in the palm fronds. His blood seemed turned to boiling water, and the words of the final orders that he tried to speak rattled together in his throat like the rustle of dead banana leaves, so that he had to make his meaning clear by signs. What wonder, then, that not even a hundred yard square of close-packed canoes, from each of which issued shouts of acclamation, could hold him when, from the cool, dark depth of the cabin, came the ringing Marquesan equivalent of 'Rum ho!'

"Boraki crossed the cockpit in one bound, negotiated the companionway in another, and with a third hurdled the prostrate forms of the prisoners and landed between his two faithful lieutenants who, after bootlessly ransacking the schooner from stem to stern, had at last discovered the wine-lockers underneath the starboard transoms in the cabin.

"Boraki was vaguely aware that each of his men was holding up a cool-looking green bottle, through the wonderful gold network of which could be seen a beautiful golden liquid that bubbled and flashed and jumped up and down, and seemed quite as impatient to get out and run down his burning throat as he was to have it do so. In the lockers below stretched endless lines of similar flashing bottles, and each line, to the chief's inflamed imagination, seemed long enough to link the lagoon of Makatea to the moon with a golden chain. He wondered how long it would take him to drink them all dry.

"But why this terrible delay? Wouldn't these fools ever set the nectar free and extinguish the flames that were licking up his insides? They were letting him die while they sought for a white man's 'pull-pull' to loosen the plugs with! What need was there for a 'pull-pull' anyhow? He would show them how the thing should be done; and suiting the action to the word, the impatient chief seized a bottle in each hand and deftly opened the two at once by knocking their heads together.

"WHAT else he opened at the same time Boraki probably never thoroughly understood, and so he was the readier to believe Loveworth when that keen opportunity told him solemnly that it was the gate of hell. After that point had been impressed upon him, his alarmed query as to whether or not all the devils who had come out when the gate opened had returned, was a perfectly natural one. He said that the only thing he clearly remembered was a feeling of wonder that the heads of the beautiful bottles should knock off so easily, and that his first recollection after that was of crying out, because he thought some one was raking off his face with a comb made of shark hooks.

"As a matter of fact the incidents alluded to were separated by more than an hour of time, and the shark-hook comb sensation was caused by the well-meant

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efforts of the first and second mates to remove the cast-iron hat from Boraki's head with the aid of a hammer, file and cold chisel.

"When the roughly-opened bottles of 'Extra Spry' kicked downward and set off the whole mine in the lockers, the henchmen were only slammed across to the opposite side of the cabin and deposited senseless against the china-closet; but the king himself, caught bending over, received the full force of the explosion upon the chest, and was shot like a rocket against the ceiling.

"By the impact, his iron hat, while it probably saved him from a fractured skull, was driven through flesh and cartilage squarely down upon his shoulders, fitting so closely that only a rust hole in the crown saved its wearer from speedy strangulation. Surely no other king in history, so securely crowned, ever furnished so graphic an illustration of the 'Uneasy lies the head' adage.

"Ten seconds after the explosion, out of all the horde that had swarmed over her, not a Makatean who could help himself remained aboard the *Southern Cross*, and in less than that many minutes not a canoe cut the waters of the lagoon and no man, woman nor child was stirring in the village. Huddled in their houses, the whole population was awaiting in fear and trembling the moment when the devil ship would reopen with its invisible cannon.

"The terror of the people was increased a hundredfold when a man who, watching at the skylight of the cabin, had been stunned by the explosion, came floundering madly ashore a half-hour later and ran from house to house telling in broken speech how he had seen the white men—whom they had all beheld lying bound and lifeless on the cabin floor—rise up and begin driving spikes through King Boraki's head. Never was clay laid ready to the hand of the molder more plastic than was the outlaw community of Makatea at that moment; nor was ever man better qualified to make the most of the situation than the Reverend Horatio Loveworth.

"LYING on the floor as we had been, the explosion, far from doing us injury, in the stiff jolt it gave our battered frames only hastened our return to consciousness. Loveworth was the first to slip the napkins which bound his wrists. Dazed as he was, the good chap yet had the presence of mind to make the three of us who were still tied promise to refrain from murdering Boraki and his fellows before he would assist us in freeing our bonds.

"To hold the mates to their promise, once their hands were free to rove over the swelling mounds that marked the spots where the pirate's hard-swung water-bottle had fallen, was a more difficult matter. They helped me truss up the henchmen and release the sailors, but enlisting them in actual relief work was a task so well-nigh hopeless that Loveworth gave it up in despair after a few minutes of entreaty, and began alone.

"It was the muffled gurglings and convulsive wrigglings set going by his first tug at the iron plug that finally brought the belligerents into line, scenting in the vigorous application of 'first-aid' measures a possible means of accomplishing their end without bringing about an open rupture with the missionary, to whom they were greatly devoted. Considering the zeal with which they set about their errand of mercy, and their manner of wielding the tools in the delicate operation of chipping Boraki's head out of the iron hat, there was no difficulty in locating the source of the fugitive Makatean's spike-driving story.

"One of the king's first questions after he had been informed that it was the gate of hell that had swung on him was, not unnaturally, as to whether or not the gate swung very often like that, and if it did, when the next swinging was likely to occur. When he was told that this was only a special swinging directly occasioned by his shameless treachery, and that anyhow, the danger was one that never threatened good Christians, he was silent for a space, and then asked with apparent irrelevance, what had become of the green bottles.

" 'Gone to ——' began the mate in an angry roar, the realization of an almost personal loss suddenly assailing him—'the other side of the gate,' gently concluded the Reverend Horatio after checking the obstreperous Australian's threatened outburst of profanity with an upraised hand.

" 'Then teach me and my people how to remain on this side of the gate,' gasped Boraki hoarsely, as he sank back with a shiver among the silk sofa cushions which supported his battered frame.

"SO it came to pass that when the king had rested for a while we putt he Crown and Anchor banner of the Missionary Society in his hands, propped him up in the stern sheets of the starboard lifeboat with one of his faithful henchmen on either side, and sent him ashore, rowed by a volunteer crew of the least hurt of the sailors.

" 'Tell your people,' shouted Loveworth as the boat gained headway under a lengthening stroke, 'that you have come back from the gate of hell to help me guide them out of the darkness into the light and to life everlasting. If they are ready to accept the teaching, hoist the flag in front of your council house.'

"Boraki heard and nodded vigorously with the gory cylinder that served him as a head.

"The referendum was accomplished in record time, for in less than five minutes from the moment the boat touched the beach, we saw a man dart out of a side portal of Boraki's palm-leaf palace and run like mad to the foot of the lopped-off coconut tree that stood before the long turtle-backed council house. With straining eyes, we saw him clamber, monkey-like, up the lofty stump, caught the flashes of a furiously swung hammer, and then, snapping exultantly in the whistling southeast trade, the flag of the golden Crown and Anchor streamed out from the official flagpole of Makatea. The people had made their choice.

"No sooner was his beloved banner out to the breeze than Loveworth, taking with him the disgusted second-mate, put off for the beach in the whale-boat to catch at its flood the tide of fortune which had at last begun to set so strongly in his favor. The mate and I went below to take stock of the wreck in the cabin.

" 'S'elp me Father Neptune, I'd give a month's pay to the new mission to know what it was that knocked them bloomin' pirates into the shape we woke up to find 'em in,' said the mate musingly, sinking down with a sigh of relief upon the undisturbed cushions of a port transom. 'P'raps they took liberties with a bunch o' rockets or a keg o' powder; only there ain't no fire marks nowhere. All the booze smashed up, too. Wonder who's at the bottom of it, anyhow. Eh! What? Who spoke? You, capt'n? No? Oh, you old tinhorn. My word, but you gave me a turn. 'God,' you sez. 'That's what Pilot Loveworth sez too, and p'raps it's true; but what gets me is how he done it. You wasn't laid out with a crack on the nut, old tinhorn; tell us how it happened.'

" 'Brrr—in a mysterious way—brrr,' came the droning answer, leaving us no wiser than before.

"The jolt of the mate's weary body had thrown over the half-shifted lever of the already wound-up gramophone, which had been abandoned on the transom by Loveworth when he turned to receive the first onslaught of Boraki's henchmen, and the record had commenced to spin. The sounding-box floundered like a squirrel on its wheel as the black disk, scarred and littered from the explosion, whirled beneath the needle, and it chanced that the only intelligible words that came from the horn in the first few moments were those which the astonished mate had, for an instant, taken as an answer to his conjectures.

"The needle steeple-chased for a couple of circuits after that without communicating anything relevant, following which, suddenly and without warning, it came out of the woods onto a stretch of smooth, undamaged going. Then, in the clear, flute-like tenor of 'Harry McMurtry, Columbophone Record,' came the words of Loveworth's favorite hymn—

> 'God moves in a mysterious way
> His wonders to perform.'

"The missionary, who was kneeling on the beach invoking a blessing on the heads of the terrified wretches who had come pouring from their houses to grovel at his feet, told me afterwards that the words came floating down to him across the still waters of the lagoon like a voice from the other world.

"That was all the comment that the only English-speaking witness of the miracle wrought by 'Hum's Extra Spry' was destined ever to make, for at the beginning of the next lap the needle went into an incipient crack and split the record down the middle. The two pieces, together with the scarred fragments of a cast-iron top hat, are still preserved by Loveworth in the little coral mission at Makatea."

THE green bottle on Carew's chair arm had been tilted with increasing frequency as his story approached its climax, and for the last fifteen or twenty minutes, save for short spells when he had rallied to explain this or that phenomenon, he had talked with a far-away expression in his eyes, like one who visualizes, and describes what he sees. He roused somewhat at the ripple of applause which greeted the end of the yarn, but he made his adieux like a man in a dream, and his gaze was blank and vacant as he lurched unsteadily down the gangway to the *Clio's* launch.

That was the last we ever saw of the Honorable "Slope" Carew. He sailed next day in the *Clio* to pilot that gunboat to an unmarked rock somewhere to the northwest, which was to be blown up or charted. A year later, while in Australia, I read in a Noumea dispatch to the Sydney *Morning Herald* that he had shot himself on the lawn of the *Cercle Militaire* in a fit of melancholia following a night of absinthe drinking.

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The Shyest Man

By Garet Garrett

A whimsical and very human story that takes you into that mystical shadow-land that is the soul of the commuter, who, between the anxious scurryings on the treadmill of his daily journey to his cubicle of toil, often has time to dream, and often has adventures the world does not know of.

THE Shyest Man was bookkeeper at twenty-five a week in a Water Street ship-chandler's place. His nearest friend was assistant-bookkeeper; stipend, twenty-two-fifty.

Nearest Friend went and gave himself in matrimony to a nervous, aggrieved woman, who took him to live in New Jersey. She began to worry him with thoughts of how he might displace the Shyest Man, whom she had never seen, and get his twenty-five dollar job; or how, if he were ambitious and really deserved a woman, he might undertake both jobs in one at thirty-five and save his employer twelve-and-a-half. Oh, if only she were a man!

One evening, on closing their books, the two men talked. Nearest Friend cast away the pretence of not being very miserable, and told the Shyest Man everything. Their souls glowed with understanding, and a fretful woman waited dinner until it spoiled. As they were parting that night one of them—the one you may guess—said to the other: "If my experience teaches you a lesson, that will be something, remember." They had been drinking a little.

Soon afterward Nearest Friend died.

The Shyest Man went to assist at the obsequies and was needed to help bring the coffin down the stairway of a house on which you pay one hundred down and twelve a month forever, or until the real-estate company fails, when you begin all over again. With all their care they knocked the newel-post down. A piece was splintered out of the edge of the coffin, but it went back into place and the damage couldn't be noticed, really.

As one who was handy with tools, the Shyest Man could not bear to turn his back on disrepair. After the funeral he returned with the widow to fix the newel-post. She was not much interested in that, but sat apart, with her back to him, and talked narratively in stringy, nasal tones. When he was through you couldn't imagine that anything had ever happened to the newel-post, or that there was aught for a poor widow to do but to go and fling herself headlong into the nearest large body of water. The Shyest Man offered to come and take board with her until better things should turn up. She closed with him, not graciously, but as if she were obliged to make the best of it—as if he were something her husband owed her, and that was little enough. She settled the charge, to be twelve a week; and he went away wondering what her condition would be if she had succeeded in imparting to the unambitious deceased the meanness to covet two bookkeeping jobs.

However, the woman was partly right, as women so often are, though not always in the way they think. The ship-chandlery business in Water Street was declining. Instead of hiring another assistant-bookkeeper, the proprietor gave all the work to the Shyest Man, with no increase in pay.

When he told the widow this she regarded him with an Arctic disesteem in which all his little vanity of sex withered and perished. She had not meant to kill it—not quite. She knew better. But she had underestimated its strength, and afterward she was very sorry, for the Shyest Man's unsexed feeling before her became a tower of unconscious resistance.

THE second day after the funeral he occupied the widow's parlor with a trunk, an imitation-leather suitcase, *Les Misérables* in two volumes, and a book on psychic phenomena. The green-velvet couch had been moved up-stairs to the woman's room. In its place was the bed, which had come down-stairs.

He sat on his trunk and stared long at the bed, with a morbid, conglomerate emotion which he heroically prevented from breaking into definite thoughts. After a long time she knocked at his door and announced plaintively that his supper was ready. She left him to eat it alone.

He had preferred that she should. The thought of sitting in his friend's place, opposite the relict, had been very painful to him. And yet, more than other men, being shy, he craved human society with his food. A dirge of loneliness tolled in his ears.

The food was fair.

Breakfast was not quite so bad. The widow stood by with a distant, proprietary air, and said "Good morning" twice—once when he appeared at the table and again as he set off.

At the station he paid seven-fifty for a commutation ticket, gloomed over the loss of twenty rides by beginning on the eleventh of the month, and attached himself unnoticed to that tide of humanity which rises in the hills and valleys and meadows of New Jersey, daily except Sundays, breaks on New York City, spends its strength there and ebbs back at evening time with its hands relaxed. In this tide are many currents. The one to which fate allotted the Shyest Man was that which took the river-leap from Communipaw, and does still, abhorring to go under water by tube. He felt it gather mass and velocity as it moved. It carried him through the railroad terminal at Communipaw like a molecule through the nozzle of a hose. He marveled at its power of self-conservation, for though it poured itself under high pressure into ferryboats, filling each one in turn to the gurgling point like bottles in mechanical rotation, it never spilled a drop.

He saw all this on the first day, became a docile part of it on the second, and was quite unconscious of it by the end of a week. He quickly formed a commuter's three preferences toward seats on the train. He took pleasure in capturing the first, was not displeased with the second, and made the best of the third; but that day had a wrong beginning on which all three were preempted by persons who were not commuters really, but week-end visitors or early shoppers to whom one seat ought to be like any other. Also, he found a particular spot on the ferryboat. It was a place to stand in all but rainy weather—near the bow, against the rail.

And there he stood, with the regularity of morning, gazing at the rhythmic water patterns ahead. They made him dream. He was bold in dreams. Shy people are. He dreamed of happiness, aye, of happiness with a lovely woman who should adore him as the doer of mighty deeds. He had dreamed that way before, but never with so much reckless delight as now. Always before there had been the sting of knowing how utterly unattainable such realities were, for reasons inherent in the weakness of his nature; whereas now he could make believe to date all impossibilities from the day of the Nearest Friend's funeral—in fact, from the moment in which he resolved to return to the house and mend the newel-post. In consequence of that act he had become the sole support of a frail, imperishable female. Alas, what trifling incidents do shape all this human affair!

ONE foggy morning, on the bow of the ferryboat, the water patterns being invisible, he opened his ears to the conversation around him. He heard a voice say:

"Ah, well—the only tragedy is that people get born, grow up, grow old and die. Nothing else really happens."

That was his own tragedy. He had never had the words for it before. He was flooded with a sense of immemorial sacrifice.

It occurred to him that the thought must have come out of a book which the speaker dishonorably neglected to credit. Surely no man standing on the bow of a ferryboat could off-hand invent a truth like that.

The man went on talking, saying banal things, and the Shyest Man turned to look. The speaker happened at that instant to be looking straight at him. The Shyest Man reddened, and averted his eyes. To be stared at, eye to eye, was a rudeness he had never been able to endure. But he was sure it had come out of a book, a wonderful book, and he wanted it. The idea of asking the stranger for its title began to torment him. His imagination

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rapidly constructed the incident and he acted it out in his mind. First, he touched the man lightly on the arm, saying in a perfectly natural and casual manner: "I beg your pardon, sir, but just now you said something out of a book—something about the tragedy of life. Do you mind——?"

The people around began staring at him. It was very painful. The strange man said: "What's that?" Others began edging in to listen. There was the agony of beginning all over again, and he made the blunder of starting as before, with "I beg your pardon, sir"—like something he knew by heart.

Just then the ferryboat bumped into her slip. The Shyest Man awoke as from a nightmare. None of it had happened at all. Nobody was looking at him. The strange man had disappeared in the crowd.

Though now he should perhaps never find the book, yet he had solace in the profound reflection that there couldn't possibly be more than that in one book. He repeated the words:

"The only tragedy is that people get born, grow up, grow old and die. Nothing else really happens."

He repeated them so many times that they ceased to have word-sense and became a vivid dramatic vision, instantaneously complete, like a dream play. It became, in fact, a day-dream play. He was continually taking people of all sorts and conditions and putting them into the play. The plot was fixed—that is, fixed as to the order and arrangement of the four great experiences which none could escape. The inexhaustible interest was in seeing how the different characters would react, each according to his inner nature.

In a little while he had used up in this way a great deal of commonplace human material, such as the man who so often occupied his first preferred seat on the morning train, persons at random who got in his way without saying they were sorry, and others who by some outstanding characteristic caught his fancy. And then he began to choose and discriminate. It was not everybody who deserved to be put into his play, for it was really a sad and most beautiful play, and was improving all the time.

He never once thought of putting the widow into it. This was perhaps owing to an unconscious lack of curiosity. He knew beforehand how she would act.

ALL the little incidents from which important events are predetermined to issue occur unexpectedly and yet so naturally. It was so one morning as the ferryboat poked into her slip on the New York side. The Shyest Man, standing in his own place and expecting nothing unusual to happen to him there, had a startling and subtle experience, all to himself. He was suddenly aware of gazing straight into a pair of human eyes. They were the dark eyes of a young windlass-tender on the pontoon of the ferry-house.

The work of such a man is unexciting. When the bow of the boat is near enough, he steps aboard with the windlass-rope, makes it fast by its hook, steps back again, and winds the rope in until the boat's nose is snubbed tight to the pontoon. Then he steps aboard a second time, cries "Hands off!" and opens the gates to let the people out.

It was as the young man stood poised with the windlass-rope, waiting for the boat to come in close, that the Shyest Man looked into his eyes as he had never looked into anybody's eyes before. The strangeness of it lay partly in the discovery that he could do it without the slightest embarrassment. The reason for that was that the windlass-tender, though seeming to do so, was not looking at the Shyest Man at all. He was looking instead into a welter of faces on the bow of the boat with that unseeing, impersonal stare so easily acquired by those who work in the gaze of the multitude. Therefore, any one on the ferryboat might stare at him long and hard, as the Shyest Man did, without feeling a personal return of the impertinence.

The Shyest Man was thrilled and fascinated. For several days he failed fully to comprehend the physical peculiarities of the situation. When they were clear to him he began to think it was like looking boldly into a private window and being one's self invisible. He would have felt disgraced to go on doing it but for a faith already formed that he should never see anything the young man need be ashamed of. And besides, here was a human being just entering upon the third and most interesting aspect of the tragedy who was open unawares to a kind of psychic penetration. That made it irresistible.

THE Shyest Man was self-persuaded that he possessed psychic powers. He had only to shut his eyes to be able by a kind of inner vision to see anything near or far that he wished to see, and many other things besides that he never consciously wished up. These other uninvented things were the great realities. He never questioned them. Often he had proved them without vanity. Once at breakfast he had astonished the widow by saying abruptly:

"Last night, just before going to bed, you got his picture out and looked at it for two or three minutes, holding it in both hands, out from you—so."

She was standing at the table pouring his coffee. He could not see her face, but he knew by the time she took to answer that she must have been taken greatly by surprise. She filled his cup, put in the milk and sugar, the sugar very slowly; and then, instead of putting it down by his plate as usual, she held it so that he had to reach for it; and as he took it she spoke:

"Poor Henry! How did you know?"

Henry was then nearly six years dead.

Again, one evening directly on entering the house he said: "You were at his grave to-day."

She was apparently not surprised. "Yes," she said. "Poor Henry!"

If the widow had denied the facts in both cases it would have been all the same to him. He knew. Of course he was continually imagining experiences and situations that were unreal, like heroic deeds and the blissful companionship of a loving woman; but these things were never confused with those that flashed themselves unbidden upon the film of his inner consciousness. This psychic seeing was a gift. The more it was exercised the more seeing it was. In the imperfect state it had been merely a kind of clairvoyant faculty. But now in a much more subtile way it contemplated also the interior of existence. That began with looking into the eyes of the young windlass-tender. His thoughts, emotions and states of soul, changing every day, were as clear as writing to the Shyest Man; and through these he gained a vivid awareness of the tangible or external facts of the young man's life.

To specify: After having been baffled for several weeks consecutively by a psychic disturbance in the young man not consistent with any state of facts divined before this time, the Shyest Man, sitting at his desk in the ship chandler's counting-room thinking arithmetic, suddenly jabbed the red pen into the black ink and exclaimed:

"He's going to get married!"

As a psychic phenomenon it was very simple, the Shyest Man reflected. The fact had been communicated to him the instant the young man's mind made the flying leap from a state of doubt to the finished resolve That was the instant at which he jabbed the red pen into the black ink.

All of which was confirmed the next morning in the windlass-tender's eyes. They glowed with a new feeling. If the physical corroboration had been needed at all, it was supplied by the young man's disappearance from his job for a whole week. This had never happened before. He returned in a calmly exalted state of consciousness, which determined the Shyest Man to approve of what he had done.

A new and wonderful thought occurred to him. It was that he should have the supreme experience of beginning his play for once at the prolog. Until now he had been obliged to start with people already born—that is to say, the human material he had been dealing with was either growing up, growing old or dying. At last he should have an actor made to order, so-to-speak—one whose existence he was aware of before birth. For, of course, the windlass-tender would multiply.

EAGERLY he watched for the signs, and he was not disappointed. They were dim and wavering at first, representing a kind of simple wonder, at which the Shyest Man wondered, too, as if it were his own. In a certain way it was. All the understanding and vanity of becoming a father communicated themselves to his psychic perception, and so he lived experiences which otherwise had been forever inaccessible to him.

When at length the event was imminent he went about softly, aloof from himself, feeling the miracle of life in an ecstasy of detachment. Then one evening, just as he was about to retire, the great scene of his play enacted itself for the first and last time. He felt the agony of suspense, the pangs of remorse for having inflicted the torture, hope vibrating against fear like a wailing violin string, and, finally, the bursting of a wonderful white light, indescribably pure and refreshing.

That night he slept very little. The next morning he saw that the windlass-tender had not slept a wink; and the rest of it was all there in his eyes.

But, alas no human gift is perfect. When it fails us it does so at the crucial

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He stopped face to face with the windlass-tender and spoke to him, saying: "Is it a boy?"

point. With all his psychic power, strain it as he would or relax it to the utmost, the Shyest Man could not make sure of the baby's sex. It was an essential matter. He had to know. The play could not go on without the information. There was only one way to find out—the simple, direct way; and he came to it with a big effort. One morning, instead of going to the bow of the ferryboat as usual, he stood at the other end and was the last man off. Adopting a playful manner, painfully unbecoming to a man of his temperament, he stopped face to face with the windlass-tender, and spoke to him, saying:

"Is it a boy?"

The young man, thus unexpectedly addressed by a person whose existence until that moment was unknown to him, took it as might be supposed. He had the uncultivated man's suspicious wariness toward a stranger's approach and a dread of being made a sport of. A rude retort was on his tongue. But he looked a second time at the unoffending figure before him and compromised by saying:

"Come again, old top."

Slang was an unknown language to the Shyest Man, and he was too excited to note the irreverence of "old top." He understood that he had another guess. There was but one other. Afterward he marveled at the nimbleness of his wits in that situation. Responding instantly he said: "Ah, of course. A girl!"

With that he smiled embarrassedly and walked rapidly away, the windlass-tender staring after him.

His preference had been that it should be a boy. However, he had not built upon it and it did not matter. And the more he thought of it, the more wonderful it was that it had turned out to be a girl. He began to build upon her. First, he named her—Cosette. She had blue eyes (though her father's were dark), traces of auburn hair and a sharp little temper. He had often to walk the floor with her at night. And she entered at once upon the second phase of the tragedy. She began to grow up.

On her first birthday he stopped again at the stern-end of the ferryboat in order to be the last passenger off, and again confronted the windlass-tender:

"How's the girl?" he asked.

"Fine," said the young man, broadly. "Finer'n silk."

AFTER this the Shyest Man noticed that each morning as the ferryboat nosed into her slip the young man, standing there on the pontoon waiting with the hook of the windlass-rope, picked him out of the crowd for personal regard. In short, the two unconscious windows through which the Shyest Man had been peering into another's life now became conscious and began to stare back. This he could not endure. He averted his eyes thereafter.

It made no difference really. He found that his psychic acquaintance with Cosette now existed independently of the father. His gift had developed that much further. But once a year, on Cosette's birthday, he stepped on the stern of the boat, trailed the crowd off, and asked the same question—"How's the girl?"—and invariably received the same answer—"Fine. Finer'n silk."

And how the years went away! Though he lived with Cosette day by day through the second act—or perhaps by reason of that very fact—he could hardly believe that she grew so fast. He would stop suddenly in the midst of something and say: "Just think! She's nearly five." And a little while later: "Fancy. She's going on eight. How they do grow up." Then she was ten and her dresses came lower. Next she was fifteen and they came down to her shoe-tops. He should never see her pink little knees again. And one morning in the stern of the ferryboat he found himself saying: "Eighteen! I can't imagine it. She is eighteen to-day."

Having asked the same question and received the same answer as seventeen times before, he added:

"Why, she will soon be getting married."

"Yep," said the windlass-tender, grinning. "Next Thursday."

It was hard to think arithmetic that day. Figures had a way of dancing about, disappearing and reappearing fantastically in blurry dimness. "I shall have to begin wearing glasses," the Shyest Man said to the misbehaving figures, "if you intend to keep this up."

Thursday! That was the day after to-morrow. His little Cosette! Psychic perception failed him. It did not once occur to him to try with his inner vision to see the man who had introduced himself without notice or invitation right at the end of the second act. Poor little Cosette!

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In the lunch hour he went to the bank and drew out a tenth of his life's savings. In the early evening he went roaming about New York, through Maiden Lane, up and down Broadway and even into Fifth Avenue, looking into jewelers' windows. The object of his search was an amethyst necklace. Cosette was born in February He had never bought a piece of jewelry. Venturing suddenly into a small shop he found a jeweler to be a more sympathetic person than he could have supposed. This one was interested not only in selling a beautiful necklace, but also in the beautiful young person who was going to wear it, and he obtained a full account of her life from the very beginning of it. At the end he said—the jeweler said—he had always thought that kind of girl existed only in books from the cirulating library, or perhaps now and then in the movies.

On his leaving the jeweler's shop certain non-psychic facts awkwardly presented themselves to the Shyest Man. They gave him a start, like the portent of a harrowing disillusionment. He did not know the name of her for whom he had bought the necklace, nor her father's name, nor where they lived. Was ever a man in this dilemna before? The windlass-tender went off his job sometime during the day. He was never there at evening. Therefore, it was impossible for him to act on first impulse, which was to go and ask him where he lived, his name, and what he had named the girl.

BUT on further reflection that night, with the necklace under the pillow, the Shyest Man was glad it had been impossible to apply to the father. It would have made him feel like a total stranger, for one thing; it would have entailed explanations, for another thing, and, besides, he had thought of a much better way. Other men than his windlass-tender worked about the ferry-house and were continually lounging to and fro across the door of the railroad company's Lost Property Room. One man tended the other windlass, of which there are two on each pontoon, and talked much with Cosette's father. They would be old acquaintances. Also there were sweepers and porters. Surely one of them would have the information he required—at least the name and address. He could pretend to have lost something on the last boat, ask to wait in the Lost Property Room on the chance of its turning up almost immediately, and then seize the opportunity between boats to talk to one of these other men.

When he came to act on this plan the next morning the beginning was easier than he could have hoped for. He passed Cosette's father without looking at him and walked rapidly to the Lost Property Room. The clerk who attended to such matters accepted his story implicitly and invited him to wait. He sat on a bench just inside the door, and was all a-tremble, not from fear, he kept telling himself, for there was nothing to fear; but from something else he couldn't account for. That was shyness. It was very hard for him to accost a stranger. Two of the other men had already passed before the door, and he had made believe that neither of them would be so likely to know, nor so easy to ask, as yet another man who had not passed He would ask the next man and get it over with. Why this silly hesitation? He began to be out of patience with himself. It was after all a very simple thing to do. He would say——but what would he say? "You should have thought all that out before," he said to himself; and he began at once to think it out. He would say: "Can you tell me, please, the name and address of the man who tends windlass on the other side—the small man with the brown eyes?" And then what would the man say? The man would say—he would say, "Go ask him yourself. He's right over there." Or worse still, he would call out loudly to the windlass-tender: "Here's somebody wants your name and address."

She was getting the supper on and turned to look at him. He seemed to be holding something out to her.

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The Shyest Man was stunned by this unexpected outcome of the imaginary conversation. He was ready to weep for humiliation and chagrin. His whole clumsy plan had utterly collapsed. He had now but one thought, which was to escape. While he was debating how he should tell the clerk that he could not wait, and what he should say if the clerk asked him to describe what he had lost, he heard voices just around the door-jamb outside. To listen was a momentary refuge; and he could hear distinctly:

One voice said: "Know that old man with the funny whiskers comes over on the eight-thirty-three—the one that give me a dollar last Christmas? He's dead."

Another voice—the voice of Cosette's father—asked: "What did he die of?"

"Age," said the first voice. "Yesterday it was. A man told me this morning."

"I can't help watching them get old," said the voice of Cosette's father. "They don't notice it themselves. They're a little older every day, and they don't think of it. I remember what a lot of them looked like twenty years ago."

"It ain't nothing anybody can take credit to themselves for—getting old ain't," said the first voice. "We all got to do it."

After a pause the voice of Cosette's father continued: "You kind o' get acquainted with them, though, seeing them so much. There's a man on my side of the seven-forty-five, that's been handing me the same josh for eighteen years, and I ain't sure I got it yet. One morning he stops and says to me, 'It's a boy, ain't it?' When he seen I didn't get it, or maybe I answered like I thought he was stringing me, he says, very polite, says he, 'Then, it's a girl,' and goes right along on his journey. He don't speak to me again for a year, and then one morning he stops the same way and says to me, 'How's the girl?' Says I, 'She's fine.' He's been handing me that once a year ever since. He ain't crazy at all. Yesterday he says, as usual, 'How's the girl?' and says I, as usual, 'She's fine,' and then he says, 'She's nearly old enough to get married.' To keep it up I says, 'She's going to get married next Thursday.' Now what do you make of that?"

"He thinks you got married yourself a long time ago and had a kid," said the first voice.

"Me married!" said the voice of the imaginary Cosette's imaginary father, with a falling inflection, as if it were something too preposterous to be even surprising. "What made him think that?"

"Maybe in your young life you looked worried and he got the symptoms wrong," said the first voice.

"Well, that's one kind of worry I never had," said the other. "I've had trouble enough taking care of myself."

THAT was a heart-breaking day for the Shyest Man. During hours he went out and bought a pair of spectacles from a push-cart. They did not help at all. On the train that night, going home, he took the package containing the necklace out of his pocket and kept turning it over in his hands. He was not even considering what he should do with it. But it was all he had left of a precious dream, and therefore he held it in his hands.

He was still holding it tight when he entered the widow's house. She was getting the supper on and turned to look at him. He seemed to be holding something out to her. She wasn't quite sure. It was a small parcel in his hand, carried stiffly and a little out from him, and his seeming to be dazed might be only his shyness. She reached for it. He surrendered it mechanically. He was not thinking of anything. She put it aside until after supper. He tried to eat. His food would not swallow. In a little while he went and sat in his room with his back to the door, staring through the window at the suburban lights. She went up-stairs with the little package.

He did not hear her coming into his room. She stood silently at his back for several minutes, expecting him to speak. He neither spoke nor stirred. She laid her two hands on his head and gently smoothed his thin white hair. They had never touched each other before, not even to shake hands. Then she leaned over and kissed him on the cheek.

On the Sunday next she married him.

It made very little difference to either of them. The bed went up-stairs again and the green-velvet couch came back to furnish the parlor.

THE Shyest Man now stands each morning in a new and sheltered spot on the upper-deck of the ferryboat, dreaming of things that life can not touch, and coming unawares to the end of his play. He will never see the windlass-tender in this world again

Half-Circles

By Sara Teasdale

I

The Mystery

YOUR eyes drink of me;
  Love makes them shine,
Your eyes that lean
  So close to mine.

We have long been lovers,
  We know the range
Of each others' moods
  And how they change.

But when we look
  At each other so,
Then we feel
  How little we know.

The spirit eludes us,
  Timid and free—
Can I ever know you
  Or you know me?

II

The Conflict

OH, YOU are coming, coming, coming!
  How will hungry time put by the hours till then?
But why does it anger my heart to long so
  For one man out of the world of men?

Oh, I would live in myself only
  And build my life lightly and still as a dream—
Are not my thoughts clearer than your thoughts,
  And colored like stones in a running stream?

Now the slow moon brightens in heaven,
  The stars are ready, the night is here—
Oh, why must I lose myself to love you,
  My dear?

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Hidden Creek

By Katharine Newlin Burt

Author of "The Branding-Iron"

The Last Instalment

CHAPTER TEN (Continued)

THEY had washed up their dishes. Sheila was putting a log on the fire. It rolled out of her grasp to the bearskin rug and struck Miss Blake's foot. Before Sheila could even say her quick, "I'm sorry," the woman had come at her with a sort of spring, had gripped her by the shoulders, had shaken her with ferocity and let her go. Sheila fell back, her own hands raised to her bruised shoulders, her eyes phosphorescent in a pale face.

"Miss Blake, how dare you touch me!"

The woman kicked back the log, turned a red face and laughed.

"Dare! You little silly! What's to scare me of you?"

An awful conviction of helplessness depressed Sheila's heart, but she kept her eyes leveled on Miss Blake's.

"Do you suppose I will stay here with you one hour, if you treat me like this?"

That brought another laugh. But Miss Blake was evidently trying to make light of her outbreak. "Scared you, didn't I?" she said. "I guess you never got much training, eh?"

"I am not a dog," said Sheila shortly.

"Well, if you aren't"—Miss Blake returned to her chair and took up a magazine. She put the spectacles on her nose with shaking hands. "You're my girl, aren't you? You can't expect to get nothing but petting from me, Sheila."

If she had not been icy with rage, Sheila might have smiled at this. "I don't know what you mean, Miss Blake, by my being your girl. I work for you, to be sure. I know that. But I know too that you will have to apologize to me for this."

Miss Blake swung one leg across the other and stared above her glasses.

"Apologize to *you!*"

"Yes. I will allow nobody to touch me."

"Shucks! Go tell that to the marines! You've never been touched, have you? Sweet sixteen!"

Hudson's kiss again scorched Sheila's mouth and her whole body burned. Miss Blake watched that fire consume her, and again she laughed.

"I'm waiting for you to apologize," said Sheila again, this time between small set teeth.

"Well, my girl, wait. That'll cool you off."

Sheila stood and felt the violent beating of her heart. A log in the wall snapped from the bitter frost.

"Miss Blake," she said presently, a pitiful young quaver in her voice, "if you don't beg my pardon I'll go to-morrow."

Miss Blake flung her book down with a gesture of impatience. "Oh quit your nonsense, Sheila," she said. "What's a shaking! You know you can't get out of here. It'd take you a week to get anywhere at all except into a frozen supper for the coyotes. Your beau's left the country—Madder told me at the post-office. Make the best of it, Sheila. Lucky if you don't get worse than that before spring. You'll get used to me in time, get broken in and learn my ways. I'm not half bad, but I've got to be obeyed. I've got to be master. That's me. What do you think I've come way out here to the wilderness for, if not because I can't stand anything less than being master? Here I've got my place and my dogs and a world that don't talk back. And now I've got you for company and to do my work. You've got to fall into line, Sheila, right in the ranks. Once, some one out there in the world—" she made a gesture, dropped her chin on her big chest and looked out under her short dense rust-colored eye-lashes—"tried to break *me*. I won't tell you what he got. That's where I quit the ways of women—yes, ma'am, and the ways of men."

She stood up and walked over to the window and looked out. The dogs were sleeping in their kennels, but a chain rattled. "I've broke the wolf-pack. You've seen them wriggle on their bellies for me, haven't you? Well, my girl, do you think I can't break *you?*" She wheeled back and stood with her hands on her hips. It was at that moment that she seemed to fill the world. Her ruddy eyes glowed like blood. They were not quite sane. That was it. Sheila went suddenly weak. They were not *quite* sane—those red eyes, filled with sparks.

The girl stepped back and sat down in her chair. She bent forward, pressed her hands flat together palm to palm between her knees, and stared fixedly down at them. She made no secret of her desperate preoccupation.

Miss Blake's face softened a little at this withdrawal. She came back to her place and resumed her spectacles.

"I'll tell you why I'm snappy," she said presently. "I'm scared."

This startled Sheila into a look. Miss Blake was moistening her lips. "That horse—you know—the coyotes got him. I guess he went down and they fell upon him. Well, he was the dogs' winter meat."

"What do you mean?"

"That's what I buy 'em for. Little old horses, for a couple of bits, and work 'em out and shoot 'em for winter dog-feed. Well, Sheila, when they're fed, they're dogs. But when they're starved—they're wolves—— And I can't think what's come to the elk this year. To-morrow I'll take out my little old gun."

TO-MORROW and the next day and the next, she took her gun and strapped on her shoes and went out for all day alone into the cold. Each time she came back more exhausted and more fierce. Sheila would have her supper ready and waiting sometimes for hours.

"The dogs have scared 'em off," said Miss Blake. "That must be the truth." She let the pack hunt for itself at night and they came back sometimes with bloody jaws. But the prey must have been small, for they were not satisfied. Table scraps and brews of Indian meal vanished and left their bellies almost as empty as before.

"And," said Miss Blake, "we got to eat ourselves."

"Hadn't we better go down to the post-office or to Rusty?" Sheila asked nervously.

Miss Blake snapped at her. "Harness that team now? As much as your life is worth, Sheila! And we can't make it on foot. We'd drop in our tracks and freeze. If it comes to the worst we may have to try it, but—oh, I'll get something to-morrow."

BUT to-morrow brought no better luck. During the hunting the dogs were left on their chains, and Sheila, through the lonely hours, would watch them through the window and could almost see the wolfishness grow in their deep wild eyes. She would try to talk to them, pat them, coax them into doggy-ness. But day by day they responded more unwillingly. All but Berg: Berg stayed with her in the house, lay on her feet, leaned against her knee. He shared her meals. He was beginning to swing his heart from Miss Blake to her, and this was the second cause for strife.

Since that one outbreak, Sheila had gone carefully. She was dignified, aloof, very still. She obeyed and slaved as she had never done in the summer days. The dread of physical violence hung on her brain like a cloud. She encouraged Berg's affection and wondered, if it came to a struggle, whether he would side with her. She was given the opportunity to put this matter to the test.

Miss Blake was very late that night. It was midnight, a stark midnight of stars and biting cold, when Berg stood up from his sleep and barked his low short bark of welcome. Outside the other dogs broke into their clamor, drowning all other sound, and in the midst of it the door flew rudely open. Miss Blake stood and clung to the side of the door. Her face was bluish-white. She put out her hand toward Sheila, clutching the air. Sheila ran over to her.

"You're hurt?"

"Twisted my blamed ankle. God!" She hobbled over, a heavy arm round Sheila, to her chair and sat there while the girl gave her some brandy, removed the snow-shoes, and cut away the boot from a swollen and discolored leg.

"That's the end of my hunting," grunted the patient, who bore the agony of rubbing and bathing stoically. "And I reckon I couldn't have stood much more." She

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Then behind her came a sharp loud explosion. At the first rifle-shot, Berg fled with shadow swiftness through the trees.

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clenched her hand in Berg's mane. "God! Those dogs! I'll have to shoot them—next." Sheila looked up at her with a sort of horrified hope. There was, then, a way out from that fear.

"I'd rather die, I think," said the woman hoarsely. "I love those dogs." Sheila looked up into a tender and quivering face—the face of a mother. "They mean something to me—those brutes. I guess I kind of centered my heart on 'em—out here alone. I raised 'em up, from puppies, all but Berg and the mother. They were the cutest little fellows. I remember when Wreck got porcupine quills in his nose and came to me and lay on his back and whined to me. It was as if he said, 'Help me, mamma.' Sure it was. And he pretty near died. O damn! If I have to shoot them I might just as well shoot myself and be done with it—— Thanks, Sheila. I'll eat my supper here and then you can help me to bed. When my ankle's all well, we can have a try for the post-office perhaps." She leaned back and drew Berg roughly up against her. She caressed him. He made little soft throaty sounds of tenderness.

Sheila came back with a tray, and as she came, Berg pulled himself away from his mistress and went wagging over to greet her.

"Come here!" snapped Miss Blake. Berg hesitated, cuddled close to Sheila and kept step beside her.

Miss Blake's eyes went red. "Come here!" she said again. Berg did not cringe nor hasten. He reached Miss Blake's chair at the same instant as Sheila, not a moment earlier.

Miss Blake pulled herself up. The tray went shattering to the floor. She hobbled over to the fire, white with the anguish, took down the whip from its nail. At that Berg cringed and whined. The woman fell upon him with her terrible lash. She held herself with one hand on the mantelshelf, while with the other she scored the howling victim. His fur came off his back under the dreadful knife-edge blows.

"O stop!" cried Sheila. "Stop! You're killing him!" She ran over and caught Miss Blake's arm.

"Damn you!" said the woman fiercely. She stood breathing fast. Sweat of pain and rage and exertion stood out on her face. "Do *you* want that whip?"

She half-turned, lifting her lash, and at that with a snarl, Berg crouched himself and bared his teeth.

Miss Blake started and stared at him. Suddenly she gave in. Pain and anger twisted her spirit.

"You'd turn my Berg against me!" she choked and fell heavily down on the rug in a dead faint.

When she came to, she was grim and silent. She got herself with scant help to bed, her big bed in the corner of the living-room, and for a week she was kept there with fever and much pain. Berg lay beside her or followed Sheila about her work, and the woman watched them both with ruddy eyes.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
The Pack

IN JANUARY a wind blew steadily from the east and snow came as if to bury them alive. The cabin turned to a cave, a small square of warmth under a mountain of impenetrable white, one door and one window, only, opening to a space of sun. Against the others the blank white lids of winter pressed. Sheila shoveled this space out sometimes twice a day. The dog kennels were moved into it, and stood against the side of a snow-bank eight feet high, up which when they were unchained, the gaunt wolfish animals leaped in a loosely formed pack, the great mother, Brenda, at their head, and padded off into the silent woods in their hungry search for food.

BUT one day they refused to go. Miss Blake, her whip in her hand, limped out. The snow had stopped. The day was still and bright again above the snowy firs, the mountain scarped against the blue sky like a cliff of broken ice. The dogs had crept out of their houses and were squatted or huddled in the sun. As she came out, they rose and strained at their tethers. One of them whined. Brenda, the mother, bared her teeth. One by one, as they were freed, they slunk close to Miss Blake, looking up into her face. They crowded close at her heels as she went back to the house. She had to push the door to in their very jaws and they pressed against it, their heads hung low, sniffing the odor of food. Presently a long-drawn hideous howling rose from them. Time and again Miss Blake drove them away with lash and voice. Time and again they came back. They scratched at the threshold, whimpered and whined.

Sheila and Miss Blake gave them what food they would have eaten themselves that day. It served only to excite their restlessness, to hold them there at the crack of the door, snuffing and slobbering. The outer circle slept, the inner watched. Then they would shift, like sentries. They had a horrible sort of system. Most of that dreadful afternoon Miss Blake paced the floor, trying to strengthen her ankle for the trip to the post-office. At sunset when the small snow-banked room was nearly dark, she stopped, threw up her head and looked at Sheila. The girl was sitting on the lowest step of the ladder washing some dried apples. Her face had thinned to a silvery wedge between the thick square masses of her hair. There was a haunted look in her clear eyes. The soft mouth had tightened.

"How in God's name," said Miss Blake, "shall I get 'em on their chains again?"

Sheila stopped her work, and her lips fell helplessly apart. She looked up at the older woman and shook her head.

Miss Blake's fear snapped into a sort of frenzy. She gritted her teeth and stamped. "You simpleton!" she said. "You never have a notion in your head."

Sheila stood up quickly. Something told her that she had better be on her feet. She kept very still. "You will know better than I could what to do about the dogs," she said quietly. "They'll go back on their chains for you, I should think. They're afraid of you."

"Aren't you?" Miss Blake asked roughly.

"No. Of course not."

"You little liar! You're scared half out of your wits. You're scared of the whole thing, scared of the snow, scared of the cold, scared of the dogs and scared sick of me. Come now. Tell me the truth."

It was almost her old bluff bullying tone, but back of it was a disorder of stretched nerves. Sheila weighed her words and tried to weigh her thoughts.

"I don't think I am afraid, Miss Blake. Why should I be afraid of the dogs, if you aren't? And why should I be afraid of you? You have been good to me. You are a good woman."

At this Miss Blake threw back her head and laughed. She was terribly like one of the dogs howling. There was something wild and wolfish in her broad neck and in the sound she made. And she snapped back into silence with wolfish suddenness.

"If you're not scared then," she scoffed, "go and chain up the dogs yourself."

For an instant Sheila quite calmly balanced the danger out of doors against the danger within.

"I think," she said and managed one of her rifting smiles, "I think I am a great deal more afraid of the dogs than I am of you, Miss Blake."

The woman studied her for a minute in silence, then she walked over to her elk-horn throne and sat down on it. She leaned back in a royal way and spread her dark broad hands across the arms.

"Well," she said coolly, "did you hear what I said? Go out and chain up the dogs!"

Sheila held herself like a slim little cavalier. "If I go out," she said coolly, "I will not take a whip. I'll take a gun."

"And shoot my dogs?"

"Miss Blake, what else is left for us to do? We can't let them claw down the door and tear us into bits, can we?"

"You'd shoot my dogs?"

"You said yourself that we might have to shoot them."

Miss Blake gave her a stealthy and cunning look. "Take my gun then," her voice rose to a key that was both crafty and triumphant, "and much good it will do you! There's shot enough to kill one if you are a first-rate shot. I lost what was left of my ammunition the day I hurt my ankle. The new stuff is down at the post-office by now, I guess."

THE long silence was filled by the shifting of the dog-watch outside the door.

"We must chain them up at any cost," said Sheila. Her lips were dry and felt cold to her tongue.

"Go out and do it then," the mistress of the house leaned back and crossed her ankles.

"Miss Blake, be reasonable. You have a great deal of control over the dogs and I have none. I *am* afraid of them and they will know it. Animals always know when you're afraid." Again she managed a smile. "I shall begin to think you are a coward," she said.

At that Miss Blake stood up from her chair. Her face was red with a violent rush of blood, and the sparks in her eyes seemed to have broken into flame.

"Very good, miss," she said brutally. "I'll go out and chain 'em up and then I'll come back and thrash you to a frazzle. Then you'll know how to obey my orders next time."

She caught up her whip, swung it in her hand and strode to the door.

"And mind you, Sheila, you won't be able to hide yourself from me. Nor make a getaway. I'll lock this door outside and winter's locked the other. You wait. You'll see what you'll get for calling

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me a coward. Your friend Berg's gone off on a long hunt—he's left his friends outside there and he's left you. Understand?"

She shouted roughly to the dogs, snapped her whip, threw open the door and stepped out boldly. She shut the door behind her and shot a bolt, used to secure the door against animals when the owner left her house. It creaked as though it had grown rusty with disuse.

In the stillness, except for a quick shuffling of paws there was no sound at first. Sheila chose her weapon of defense. She took down from its place the Eskimo ivory spear and, holding it short in her hand she put herself behind the great elk-horn chair. Her Celtic blood was pounding gloriously now. She was not afraid, though if there had been time to notice it, she would have confessed to an abysmal sense of horror and despair. And again she wondered at her own loneliness and youth and the astounding danger that she faced. Yes, it was more astonishment than any other emotion that possessed her consciousness. The horror was below the threshold practising its part.

Then anger, astonishment, horror itself were suddenly thrown out of her. She was left like an empty vessel waiting to be filled with fear. Miss Blake had cried aloud, "Help, Sheila! Help!" This was followed by a dreadful screaming. Sheila dropped her spear and leaped to the door. On it, outside, Miss Blake beat and screamed, "Open, for God's sake!"

Sheila shouted in as dreadful a key, "On your side—the bolt! Miss Blake—the bolt!"

Fingers clawed at the bolt but it would not slip. Through all the horrible sounds the woman made, Sheila could hear the snarling and leaping and snapping of the dogs. She dashed to the small tight window, broke a pane with her fist and thrust out her arm. She meant to reach the bolt but what she saw took the warm life out of her. Miss Blake had gone down under the whirling slobbering pack. The screaming had stopped. In that one awful look the poor child saw that no human help could save. She dropped down on the floor and lay there moaning, her hands pressed over her ears.

SO SHE lay, shuddering and gasping, the great part of the night. At last the intense cold drove her to the fire. She heaped up the logs high and hung close about them. Her very heart was cold. Liquid ice moved sluggishly along her veins. The morning brought no comfort nor courage to her, only a freshening of horror and of fear. The dogs had gone, and all the winter world lay still about the house.

She was shaken by a regular pulse of nervous sobbing. But, driven by a sort of restlessness, she made herself coffee and forced some food down her contracted throat. Then she put on her coat, took down Miss Blake's six-shooter and cartridge belt, and saw with a slight relaxing of the cramp about her heart that there were four shots in the chamber. Four shots and eight dogs, but at least, she could save herself from *that* death! She strapped the gun round her slim hips, filled her pockets with supplies: a box of dried raisins, some hard bread, a cake of chocolate, some matches—pulled her cap down over her ears and took her snowshoes from the wall. With closed eyes she put her arm through the broken pane and, after a short struggle, slipped the rusty bolt. Then she went over to the door, and leaning against it, prayed. Even with the mysterious strength she drew from that sense of kinship with a superhuman Power, it was a long time before she could force herself to open. At last, with a big gasp, she flung the door wide, skirted the house, her hands against the logs, her eyes shut, ran across the open space, scrambled up the drift, tied on her snow-shoes and fled away under the snow-laden pines. There moved in all the wilderness that day no more hunted and fearful a thing.

THE fresh snow sunk a little under her webs, but she was a featherweight of girlhood and made quicker and easier progress than would have been possible to any one else but a child. And her fear gave her both strength and speed. Sometimes she looked back over her shoulder, always she strained her ears for the pad of following feet. It was a day of rainbows and of diamond spray, where the sun struck the shaken snow, sifted from overweighted branches. Sheila remembered well enough the route to the post-office. It meant miles of weary plodding, but she thought that she could do it before night. If not, she would travel by starlight and the wan reflection of the snow. There was no darkness in these clear keen nights. She would not tell herself what gave her strength such impetus. She thought resolutely of the post-office, of the old friendly man, of his stove, of his chairs and his picture of the President, of his gun laid across two nails against his kitchen wall—all this, not more than eighteen miles away! And she thought of Hilliard, too, of his young strength and the bold young glitter of his eyes.

She stopped for a minute at noon to drink some water from Hidden Creek and to eat a bite or so of bread. She was pulling on her gloves again when a distant baying first reached her ears. She turned faint, seemed to stand in a mist, then with her teeth set defiantly, she started again, faster and steadier, her body bent forward, her head turned back. Before her now lay a great stretch of undulating unbroken white. At its further edge the line of blue-black pines began again. She strained her steps to reach this shelter.

The baying had been faint and far away—it might have been sounded for some other hunting. She would make the woods, take off her webs, climb up into a tree, and perhaps attracted by those four shots—no, there, she must save one—some trapper, some unimaginable wanderer in the winter forest, would come to her and rescue her before the end. So her mind twisted itself with hope. But, an hour later, with the pines not very far away, the baying rose so close behind that it stopped her heart. Twenty minutes had passed when above a rise of ground she saw the shaggy trotting black gray body of Brenda, the leader of the pack. She was running slowly, her nose close to the snow, casting a little right and left over the tracks. Sheila counted eight. Berg, then, had joined them. She thought that she could distinguish him in the rear. It was now late afternoon and the sun slanted, driving back the shadows of the nearing trees, of Sheila, of the dogs. It all seemed fantastic—the weird beauty of the scene, the weird horror of it. Sheila reckoned the distance before her, reckoned the speed of the dogs. She knew now that there was no hope. Ahead of her rose a sharp sudden slope—she could never make it. There came to her quite suddenly, like a gift, a complete release from fear. She stopped and wheeled. It seemed that the brutes had not yet seen her. They were nose down at the scent. One by one, they vanished in a little dip of ground, one by one they reappeared, two yards away. Sheila pulled out her gun, deliberately aimed, and fired.

A spurt of snow showed that she had aimed short. But the loud, sudden report made Brenda swerve. All the dogs stopped and slunk together, circling, their haunches lowered. Wreck squatted, threw up his head, and howled. Sheila spoke to them, clear and loud, her young voice ringing out into that loneliness.

"You Berg! Good dog! Come here."

One of the shaggy animals moved toward her timidly, looking back, pausing. Brenda snarled.

"Berg, come here, boy!"

Sheila patted her knee. At this the big dog whined, cringed and began to swarm up the slope toward her on his belly. His eyes shifted, the struggle of his mind was pitifully visible—pack-law, pack-power, the wolf-heart and the wolf-belly, and against them that queer hunger for the love and the touch of man. Sheila could not tell if it were hunger or loyalty that was creeping up to her in the body of the beast. She kept her gun leveled on him. When he had come to within two feet of her, he paused. Then, from behind him rose the starved baying of his brothers. Sheila looked up. They were bounding toward her, all wolf, these—but more dangerous after their taste of human blood than wolves—to the bristling hair along their backs and the bared fangs. Again she fired. This time she struck Wreck's paw. He lifted it and howled. She fired again. Brenda snapped sideways at her shoulder but was not checked. There was one shot left. Sheila knew how it must be used. Quickly she turned the muzzle up toward her own head.

THEN behind her came a sharp loud explosion. Brenda leaped high into the air and fell at Sheila's feet. At that first rifle shot, Berg fled with shadow swiftness through the trees. For the rest, it was as though a magic wall had stopped them, as though at a certain point, they fell upon death. Crack, crack, crack—one after another they came up, leaped and dropped choking and bleeding on the snow. At the end Sheila turned blindly. A yard behind her and slightly above her, there under the pines, stood Hilliard, very pale, his gun tucked under his arm, the smoking muzzle lowered. Weakly she felt her way up toward him, groping with her hands.

He slid down noiselessly on his long skis and she stood clinging to his arm, looking up dumbly into his strained face.

"I heard your shots," he said breathlessly. "You're within a hundred yards of my house. For months I've been trying to make up my mind to come to you. God forgive me, Sheila, for not coming before!"

(*Continued on page 102*)

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THE Colonel of a British regiment returned home in a very angry mood, and when questioned by his wife as to the cause replied: "Why, that Yankee captain attached to us boasted in the mess to-day that he had kissed every officer's wife in the regiment but one."

"My word," replied his wife, "I wonder who she can be!"

PRIVATE JOHNSON was on lonely outpost duty in the danger zone. To him came Lieutenant Jones, Officer of the Day.

The general and special orders were duly recited.

"Suppose now, Johnson, that a squad of Germans were to emerge suddenly from that clump of bushes and advance toward you. What would you do?"

"Well, suh, Ah would snap to 'tenshun and fo'm a line."

"Form a line? One man form a line?"

"Yas, suh. A bee-line for camp, suh."

DORIS rushed to her mother one day in a most excited manner.

"Oh, mother, we've been playing postman and we gave every lady on our block a letter."

"But, dear, where did you get the letters?"

"Why we found them in your trunk in the garret all tied up with pink ribbon."

BEACHTOWN'S most successful miser, Bill Allhold, placed some difficult legal work in the hands of the good-hearted town lawyer. As the time for settlement approached, Allhold hemmed and hawed and manifested all the symptoms of being in acute pain over having to pay a just debt.

The attorney's cheerful good nature again asserted itself.

"I won't charge you a penny for my services," he said.

"W-well," faltered the old fellow, "I'd like to have a receipt anyhow."

PRESIDING over the class in advanced mathematics, the Harvard professor called upon the fat student to rise and elucidate the binomial theorem. The fat one stood up and complacently remarked that the problem was too deep for him, and begging to be excused for his delinquency, he sat down.

"You seem to be better fed than taught," said the professor, sarcastically.

"Yes, sir," replied the fat student. "You teach me, but I feed myself!"

EDITOR'S NOTE—Though the sign is the Chestnut Tree, no story is barred by its youth. We will gladly pay for available ones. Address all manuscripts to "The Chestnut Tree," enclosing stamped, addressed envelope.

"I THINK your father must be an awful mean man," said small Tommy Tucker as he and his schoolmate, Dick Wynne, trudged homeward.

"Why?" asked Dick in surprise.

"'Cause he's a shoemaker," said Tommy, "and he lets you go with only one little old pair of shoes to your name."

"I guess he ain't no meaner than your father," Dick said after a moment's reflection. "He's a dentist, an' your baby ain't got only one little old tooth in his head."

A GOOD man had just died, and with unseemly haste an office-seeker came after his job. The funeral had not yet taken place.

OFFICE-SEEKER: "Mr. Mayor, do you see any objection to my being put in poor Tom Smith's place?"

MAYOR: "Why no, I see no objection if the undertaker doesn't."

"I CAN'T go to jail," said the funny vagrant, "I haven't time."

"The court provides that," said the magistrate. "I give you ten days."

"BOBBY, what did you do with your peanut-shells in the car?"

"I put 'em in the overcoat pocket of that man I was sittin' by."

EUGENE and Edward, two little brothers, had an argument shortly before bedtime over their playing. Edward struck Eugene, who howled lustily, and their mother rushed in with the news that it was time for them to retire.

"Now, Eugene, dear," said the mother, as she prepared her youngest son for bed, "you must forgive your brother before you go to bed. You might die in the night, you know."

Eugene was silent for a few moments and then said:

"Well, mother, I'll forgive him to-night, but if I don't die he'd better look out in the morning."

"CU'D youse give a pore feller a bite?" asked the dust-stained tourist.

"I don't bite myself," answered the lady of the house, "but I'll call the dog."

THE fair young bride was changing her bridal costume for the traveling-suit.

"Gladys," she asked anxiously of the bridesmaid sitting near, "tell me, dear, did I appear nervous at all during the ceremony?"

"Well, dearest," replied her friend, "I did think you seemed to be somewhat nervous at first, but not after Walter had said 'Yes'!"

LADY (to colored servant): "I've told you several times, Lily, to put your hand over your mouth when you yawn."

LILY: "Yas'm, but I got bit the last time I tried it."

MRS. STARR engaged a new maid, and found her asleep for the third time in one afternoon in the kitchen rocking-chair.

"What, asleep again, Hattie!" said Mrs. Starr, completely out of patience. "When I engaged you, you told me you were never tired."

"No, ma'am, an' I ain't," replied Hattie; "but I should be if I didn't sleep."

TWO friends who lived in the country met one day (in the moist past), and one invited the other to dine with him. At the appointed time the guest set forth in the direction of his friend's house, and as the roads were dimly lighted, he took with him an old-fashioned lantern.

The dinner was good, the wine excellent and all went merrily. The next morning, however, the guest received the following note from his host of the night before:

DEAR OLD MAN: I am sending my man over to you with this note, and he brings with him your lantern. If you have quite finished with my parrot and cage I shall be awfully glad if you will return same per bearer.

A NOTED New York physician was called to attend a patient who was in the habit of reading medical books exhaustively in order to prescribe for himself.

"Be careful, my friend!" warned the physician. "One of these fine days you'll die of a misprint."

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What would you call such a man?

—A man who drove his automobile with the top down in a pouring rain?

Isn't he deserving of the same name if he neglects to put on Weed Tire Chains when roads and pavements are wet and slippery?

What do *you* call such a man?

Write it on the line below and mail it to him or to us.

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I'LL SHOW YOU THE TOWN

(*Continued from page 34*)

do the most impossible things—see perfectly impossible places, and so on. I thought that you——"

I groaned. Thanks to my dependable characteristics, I was used to being asked by my girl friends to take them to some wicked café or dance-hall that they were perfectly wild to see but could never dream of visiting with any other man; I was different, the best friend in the world.

"I'm going to spend the summer writing a book," I said, "not taking schoolgirls to perfectly impossible places."

"Alec! I expect you to keep her away from them. Don't you see? She's just a romantic, uneducated child. And I thought that some young man who was agreeable and pleasant, but perfectly safe, if you understand what I mean—somebody who could show her a little attention, and keep her amused, and give her good advice when occasion offered, might keep her thoughts from wandering toward foolish romance."

"And you picked on me," I said. "No, Edith. I will not. I'm going to write a book which is not to be impeded by schoolgirls from the Great American Desert. And if I weren't, do you think I'd burden myself with the moral responsibility for this little girl whose whole life is weighted down with this mountain of gold? I will take her to lunch, once, or to the theatre, once, to satisfy you; but no more. I have more important matters than showing her the town. Let her marry a movie-actor or a soda-fountain clerk if she wants to; she's your friend, not mine; her father discovered no gold mines for me. Besides, if you want a duenna, you'll have to find somebody else. I'm not a eu——"

"Alec! Don't be coarse."

"—genist," I proceeded, "but, as you lately reminded me, some of my ancestors came from Kentucky. They were not accustomed to keeping girls from thoughts of foolish romance. Keep your schoolgirl to yourself."

She would have argued longer, but I remembered my appointment with Dr. Goodhue. Edith was not to be denied—she never is; but at least I managed to put her off; she and Harmon were going to Southampton over the week-end, she told me, but she wanted me to meet Hazel when they came back——

I SHOOK the thought of Hazel and her untamed ways and her twelve million dollars out of my mind. She was not to come between me and my duty, or even between me and my pleasure. But that there was more duty than pleasure ahead of me, I realized when I found old Goodhue in the Holland House lobby, wiping his hands nervously on a yellowed silk handkerchief, and making frantic tugs at the lapel of his antiquated frock-coat. He was too excited for preliminaries; he began in the middle.

"Alec, the college is in trouble, and you'll have to help us out."

I was his from that moment. My father had worked himself to death for Wyndham College, and his son found somehow that that created a continuing obligation.

"If I can," I promised. Goodhue nodded.

"I was rather surprised, Alec, to find that you were to speak at the Conference on the Segregation of the Socially Inefficient."

"So was I."

"Do you know Gushmore?" Goodhue demanded.

"The name seems familiar," I said, "but I can't——"

"A professional benefactor," said Goodhue. "Of himself, chiefly. He's a handsome fellow, with a big mop of iron-gray hair, eye-glasses on a black ribbon—very effective with the ladies."

"I don't know anything about him or his conference. Do you?"

"A little. Enough, I may say. This is a conference on the betterment of social conditions, I gather. People of very high purpose. Also, by special arrangement, the expenses will be defrayed." He looked at me sharply from under his gold-rimmed spectacles. "Did you know that?"

"I read it on the invitation." I stopped there; but after all, Goodhue had known me since I was in the cradle, and he was human. "It promised a pleasant holiday, and you know, on an assistant's salary——"

"Yes," he murmured. "I have taken some pains to investigate the matter, Alec. The entire hotel has been leased for the week by a benevolent old lady from Arlington, Massachusetts, who is interested in the segregation of the socially inefficient, whatever that may be. Also, after looking over the other speakers—particularly the academic speakers—they struck me as a rather—a rather moth-eaten lot. It seemed to me that they might be glad to use the name of a young scholar of good reputation, who wouldn't ask questions beforehand. You may not be so very well known, but the others are too well known."

"But why this interest of yours?"

"THE college is in trouble," said Goodhue. "Money trouble, of course. Some of the buildings need renovating, and we ought to have a new women's dormitory. And with prices so high, unless we can increase the endowment, we face the prospect of a reduction in the salaries of the faculty. If we did that, we might as well close up the college. We need another half million badly, and we're going to start a campaign next month."

"But you don't think I can raise anything at Maplecrest——"

"You won't raise anything, but you may save a good deal. For Mrs. Clevenger is going to attend the conference."

"Mrs. Clevenger?" I repeated. "Who—Not old Zaccheus's widow?"

"The same. Mrs. Agnes Clevenger. The principal benefactress of our college."

"Good Heavens!" I said. "Agnes Clevenger! I thought she was dead. She must be pretty old, isn't she?"

"Old? She's only thirty-two."

Well, looking back, I perceived that that was possible. She was of the sort, as I remembered, that were born middle-aged and never got south of forty-nine; but that was probably the effect of her husband. After all, she'd been only eighteen when Zaccheus married her.

Agnes had been one of my father's great achievements. Among my earliest recollections was the occasional presence in our home of old Zaccheus Clevenger, with his ill-fitting Prince Albert, his made-up tie, and his gold-mounted quill toothpick. He was a bachelor, wealthy and devout and infernally stingy. My father devoted a good deal of thought to the problem of getting money out of old Zaccheus; and just as he thought he was sure of a legacy at least, the old rascal married—married at the age of sixty-nine, married Agnes, the star pupil in his Indianapolis Bible-class. Our college was as gloomy that night as if we'd lost a football game.

HOWEVER, Providence took care of the righteous. When old Zaccheus presently died childless he left his wife with three or four million dollars that she had neither the inclination nor the ability to spend. Agnes was a young woman of antique tastes and earnest disposition, and it presently appeared that her chief delight was in making a Bedford limestone building grow where only a blade of grass or a pile of tin cans had grown before. All over the Middle West, Agnes was on hand when a Y. W. C. A. building or a rescue-home was needed; and in the intervals she responded to my father's observations on Christian stewardship with the Zaccheus Clevenger Memorial Chapel, and a hundred thousand on the endowment, and a dozen scholarships for "young men of high intellectual attainments and moral character with a predilection for social service," which had been invaluable in the annual competition for high-school football stars.

"I thought she'd given it all away," I observed. "All these war drives——"

"She contributed liberally," said Goodhue. "Bountifully. But you remember the Scriptural story of the widow's cruse. It seems that her husband owned some worthless farmland in Texas; it was lately found to be full of oil. I suppose she's worth more to-day than ever. And we were counting on her for a quarter of a million."

"She ought to have that much left after the conference," I laughed, but Goodhue was worried.

"She had a personal invitation from Gushmore," he said. "It appears that he became acquainted with her through some persons who had obtained some money for flood sufferers in China. I—I thought it only prudent, as a friend of Mrs. Clevenger, to look up his record. He left the ministry some years ago. He writes for certain magazines; he has been a—a press agent for white-slave photoplays; he was on the Ford Peace Party; and after that he maintained some sort of pacifist league. So I made some investigation into this conference. Mrs. Clevenger is to be an honorary delegate. There are delegates and honorary delegates. The honorary delegates are the sheep, if I may say so—persons of considerable wealth, and benevolent inclinations; the delegates are—ah—wolves in sheep's clothing. In short, Gushmores. He is in charge, of course; but there are others. He seems to think there will be enough to go around. I have heard some talk of the

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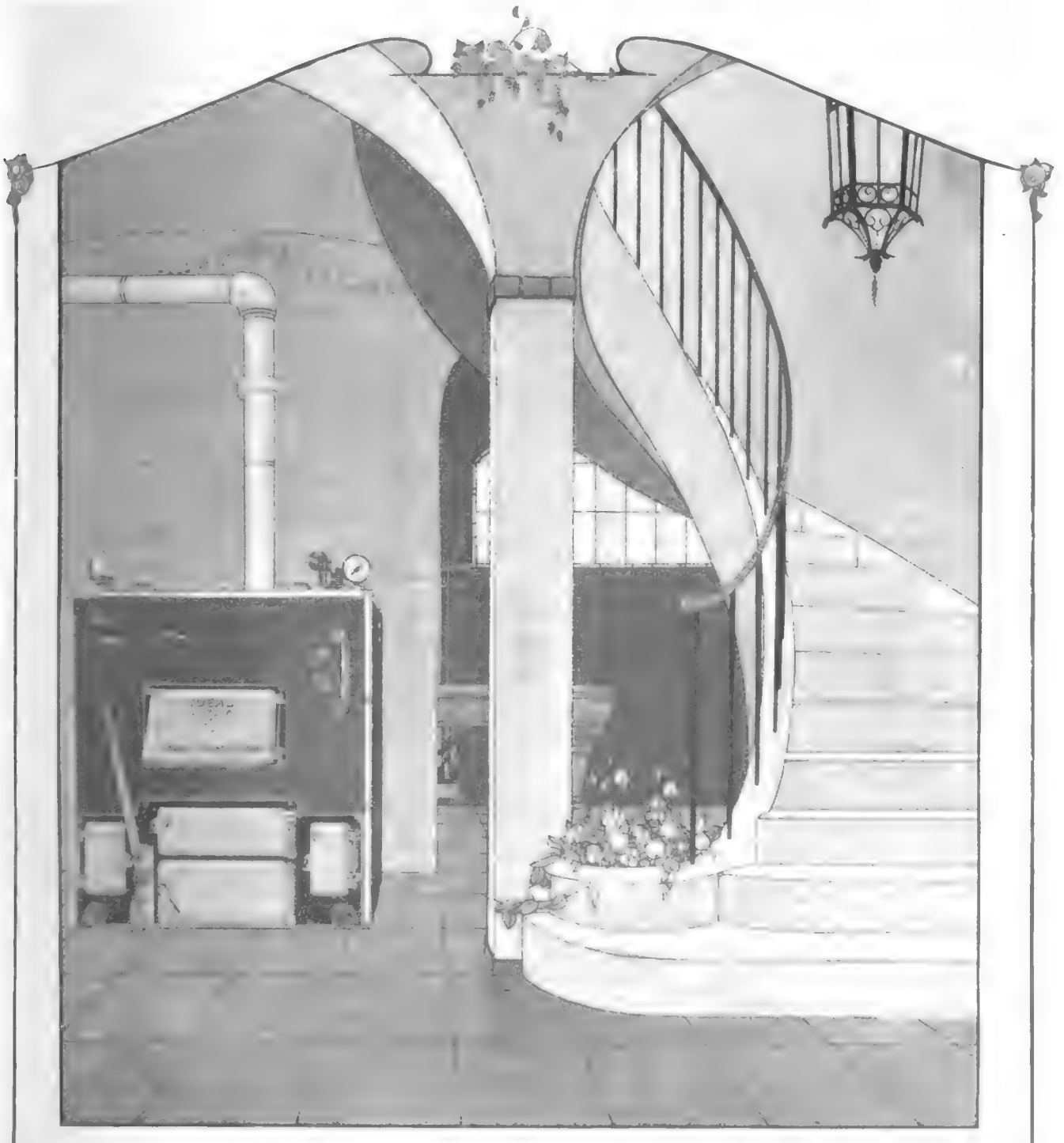

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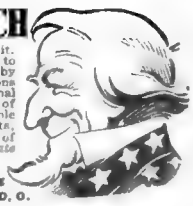

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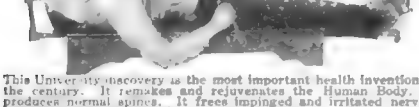

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organization of a permanent association for the segregation of the socially inefficient, with salaried officers, and administrative expenses. The old lady from Massachussetts has not provided for that. Yes. Persons of benevolent inclinations. Under the circumstances, Alec, I must admit that the college regards Mrs. Clevenger's connection with this conference with some apprehension." And he began wiping his shiny bald head with his silk handkerchief.

"Didn't you tell her about Gushmore?" I asked.

"I tried to, Alec; Heaven knows I tried to. But Mrs. Clevenger is a woman of somewhat firm opinions, of great confidence in her own judgment. And somewhat uncritical. Her enthusiasm for the—ah—somewhat undefined purposes of this gathering seems to have been extended to its promoters. Gushmore's personality appears to have impressed her. And she is so loyal to her friends and to her—ah—own opinions, that I soon found that it would be in the highest degree unwise to shake her faith. She is a noble and generous woman, of splendid impulses; and it would grieve me very much if she met some persons whose ideals are not so high as they should be; persons through whom she might have some experience that would blunt her splendid generosity. Yes. It would grieve us all very much if that should happen."

"Then why don't you go to the conference and keep an eye on her?"

"Ah; but I have no invitation. I think it is not too much to say that each invitation was sent with a purpose; and that since Mrs. Clevenger is known as a friend of Wyndham College, nobody else known to be connected with the college could get in. They didn't stop to look you up, I judge. Besides, it would be unwise. It would look as if I were trying to keep Mrs. Clevenger under surveillance; and that consecrated woman, whom I respect no less for her intellectual than for her moral qualities, might well take offense at the implication that she could not—ah—be trusted out of my sight with her own money. No, that wouldn't do at all. But you, Alec——"

"I thought so," I muttered. "What about me?"

"You will be there—a speaker, an honored figure. You know her——"

"I used to. I haven't seen her for years."

"Still, you know her. And you are a Deupree. That will mean a great deal to her. She will instinctively trust you. And it happens that there is an excellent opportunity to renew your acquaintance. Mrs. Clevenger is now at Asbury Park. The conference begins Friday next. Today is Saturday. If you can come down with me over the week end, and meet her— She is coming up to New York on Monday; she's never been here before. You can show her the town. Thus you could gain her confidence——"

"But I'm writing a book——"

THAT was a subterfuge. I wasn't going to start the book before the conference began. But I could imagine nothing less exciting than showing New York to Agnes; I knew her.

"Alec, the college needs you," said Goodhue. "Your father's college. The endowment, of course, is the principal thing; but the women's dormitory is out of date, and we've never had enough funds to complete the memorial gateway in honor of Broadus Wheelock of the class of '84."

"But you don't mean to tell me seriously that you think these people will make much of a hole in three or four millions?" I asked.

"Ordinarily, no. But there is one thing that I am afraid of. Mrs. Clevenger is only thirty-two. She is still in possession of such charms as Providence gave her. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility, Alec, that she might marry again. And Gushmore seems to attract her—Oh, it has not gone far; perhaps it has not even begun. But her experience is limited. Some designing person—some Gushmore—might take advantage of her inexperience to lure her into a most unfortunate alliance. If by any mischance she should do anything like that, we may be sure that none of her benefactions would be dispensed outside the family. Besides, Alec—she is a noble woman; she deserves something better than a Gushmore."

"DO YOU want me to marry her?" I gasped. He started so suddenly that his spectacles slid down his nose; the idea was evidently new to him.

"An alliance between the son of Wyndham's greatest president and Wyndham's most faithful friend would be entirely suitable," he mused. "Your—ah—affections are not otherwise engaged, I presume?" I told him they were not.

"But that was not what I had in mind," he continued. "It has seemed to me—and I speak as an old friend of Mrs. Clevenger—that the best way to protect her against some such unfortunate misstep as I have suggested would be to insure her the constant companionship of some one of her own age. Some one whose personality would satisfy her natural craving for society, and yet who would be perfectly safe, if you understand me. And of course you are the ideal person; for I may say, Alec, that never have I known so old a head upon such young shoulders."

"I understand you," I said. "You want somebody who will keep her thoughts from wandering toward foolish romance." For his last remark had almost driven the son of Julia Gaylord to mutiny against the plain duty of the son of John Knox Deupree. I'd do almost anything for the old college, but this was too much——

"Exactly," he said. "For I will not conceal from you, Alec, that I have had some reason to think, of late, that Mrs. Clevenger is becoming dissatisfied with the good works that have so far filled her life. I have noticed what I judged to be stirrings of a desire to see the world; to—to branch out, as it were. And if she is going to do that it would be well to have a friendly hand near by, to steady her——"

I thought the matter over with reviving hope. Agnes seeing the world would be amusing, at any rate; for once the Deuprees and the Gaylords were agreed.

"I'll come down to Asbury Park," I said. "Look for me about dinner time." For I couldn't see that my duties to the college required me to waste a June Sunday with Goodhue and Agnes Clevenger.

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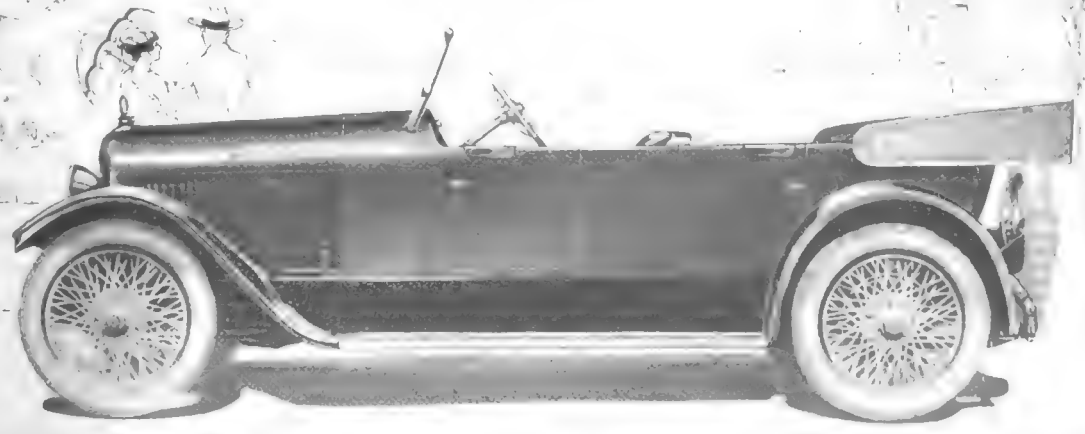

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CHAPTER THREE

For His Alma Mater

A PROSPECTIVE professor sat on the hotel veranda at Asbury Park on Sunday evening, looking out at the full moon rising over the ocean, and looking back over his dead youth.

If I saved the Clevenger fortune for the college, Goodhue would probably make me an honorary Doctor of Laws at next year's Commencement. That wouldn't be the excuse, of course; he'd hang it on the book I was going to write; but that would be the reason. And everybody around the campus—the barbers who had cut my hair, the cigar clerks who had sold me tobacco, the sons of Belial whose bowling-alleys and pool-rooms I had occasionally visited—as well as the professors who had served under my father, and the girls I'd danced with—they'd all nod their heads and say that they always knew Alec was going to be a great man.

But in past days I had been best known at Wyndham as the man who made four touchdowns against the state university. That was in my senior year, Lucile's year. I was young then, and romantic; there was nothing I couldn't do. Of course you can't do everything; but it seemed to me that the things I was doing now were the least interesting in the world. And now this book, and this professorship, and this Agnes——

THE hotel orchestra was playing something from "Madame Butterfly." Puccini always made me think of Lucile; I wondered how she got along with Pemberton. They'd looked me up, or I'd looked them up, two or three times when they came to New York, and cold reason told me that she'd always looked happy enough. But this was no night for cold reason. I waved it aside and let my imagination wander. After all, she'd cared for me, and I'd cared for her; and since her day everybody had set me down as Old Faithful, the shaggy watch-dog. Lucile would never have done that.

And worse was coming. Instead of the pretty girls who at least had played with me, if they hadn't fallen in love with me, I now faced the prospect of getting such social pleasures as might lighten my hard-working summer out of showing the town to a scared schoolgirl from the desert, and a fat frump. Yes, that was what Agnes was, as I remembered: a fat frump. With money. A scared schoolgirl with money, who would probably call me Uncle Alec.

I got up with a certain amount of unnecessary noise, and saw my fortune coming down the veranda to meet me.

It was no very enticing fortune, at first sight. Agnes was very much as I remembered; it did her no great injustice to call her a fat frump. Old Goodhue was close by her side, and on her heels hung half a dozen genuflecting acolytes, male and female—nondescript people who presently appeared from the conversation to be interested in various methods of elevating others. And they listened to her words as to the voice of a messenger from on high.

I couldn't quite account for this. We chatted rather formally about the college, and the changes since my father's time; presently everybody sat down, and Goodhue, with a deftness that would have been creditable to a professional matchmaker, placed me by her side. I sat and looked at her while she delivered herself of opinions about the higher good and the larger responsibility, and the rest of the crowd murmured, "Yes, yes, Mrs. Clevenger."

As I contemplated Agnes I felt a stir of hope. She had the raw material of beauty. Her skin, so far as I could tell in that light, was a satiny rose-and-cream; the sort of skin that usually means loving care. But there was no chance of that with Agnes; she undoubtedly looked on cosmetics as an invention of the evil one; it seemed probable that she preferred her soap unscented, her water cold. Yet the skin was there, a skin for which most of the girls I knew would have given a great sum. She had earnest eyes—I couldn't tell much about them, and marvelous pale-gold hair, arranged as unornamentally as possible. And she wasn't fat, really; her figure was ample, of the type conventionally known as voluptuous, though that was not a word to be used in connection with Mrs. Clevenger. Anyway, her clothes refused to acknowledge the figure; but it was something of a relief to find that there was nothing in bad taste. She merely had no taste at all. She might be taught.

Yes, there were possibilities; but nothing to explain that atmosphere of adulation in which it seemed Agnes continually moved. And before long I was forced to conclude that this universal deference was due to nothing but the well-known fact that this woman possessed three million dollars, and that now and then she gave some of it away.

However, they'd managed to spoil her very thoroughly. And the pity of it was that she seemed to be a simple, good-hearted girl, who'd have been rather nice in a stuffy sort of way if she'd never had any money. But, after seven years without contradiction, Agnes knew that anything she thought, did, wanted or looked like was necessarily and eternally right. I began to wonder if the surest way to this woman's confidence might not be through brutal frankness—always provided, of course, that the iron glove concealed a velvet hand.

And at last, when she'd wished a millennium on the rest of the world, she turned to me.

"AND now, Doctor Deupree, tell me about New York."

"There is a great deal to tell," I said cautiously. "I'd rather show it to you."

"I am very eager to see New York," she mused. "I've never been there. I suppose it's really a very wicked place, but it must deserve some study. I have some appointments during the week, and then of course I'm going to Maplecrest. But I should be glad to see some of the worthwhile things in New York in your company. Will you ride in with me in the morning?"

Would I? The railroad trip was nothing very comfortable in this weather, and Agnes's car would probably be a good one.

"Gladly," I said. "You'll find good roads, and a very pleasant country."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, and I thought I heard suppressed snickers from some of the mercenaries of the holy war around us. "I—I'm going in on the railroad. I have never owned an automobile. I really can't afford it. Yes, I know many people think that that is strange; but it has always seemed to me that when money is needed for so many worthy causes it would be

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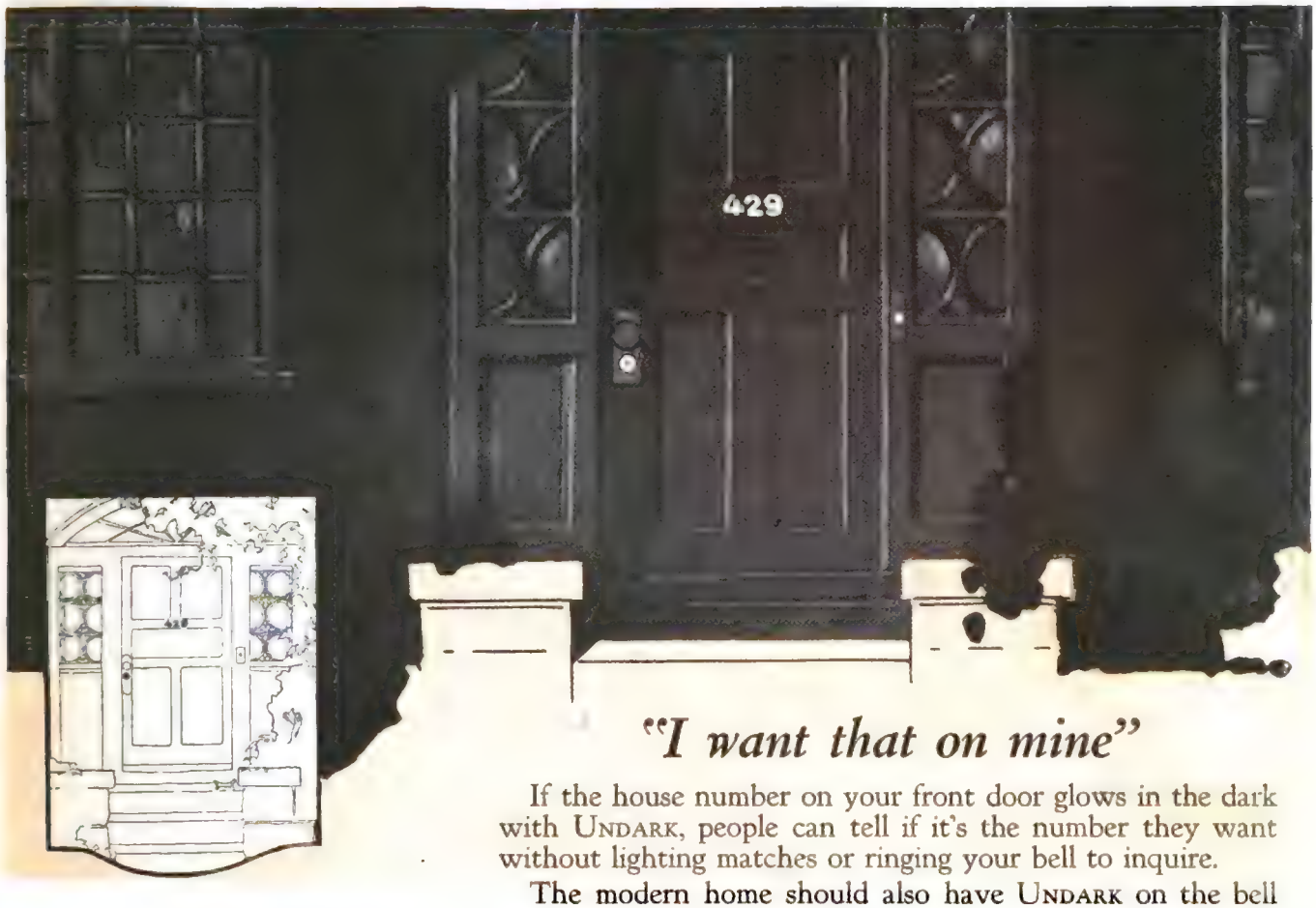

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unjustifiable to waste it on personal pleasure."

"Then drive in with me," I proposed. "I was going to hire a car anyway." Which, of course, was a stupendous lie; but I saw no other way out. Just for that, I vowed, I'd do anything that might lie in my power to make Agnes contribute nine thousand dollars for one of Bonner's Sagamores before the week was over.

"I—it seems very extravagant," she objected. "But I suppose it would be rather pleasant. Yes, Doctor Deupree, I shall be glad to accompany you. We have so many things to talk over—your sainted father's work, and your own——"

If my sainted father hadn't been President of Wyndham College, I'd never have invested thirty dollars in a touring car for that trip back to town; but I was in for it now. It was evident that Agnes's scruples about the misuse of money were purely personal; she had no objection to sunlight and scenery and the June breeze if somebody else assumed the moral responsibility. My hopes rose; she might be amenable to well-timed casuistry; at any rate, it was clear that a Deupree had quite a start over a Gushmore.

WE GOT away in good time the next morning, with old Goodhue on the steps to see us off. As we rolled away in a highly polished car, with my suitcase and Agnes's steamer trunk strapped on behind; it was all there but the streamers of white ribbon, and not without some malice I left Goodhue to think things over. The sun was shining, and it was my morning to make hay.

Nothing happened for half an hour or so except discussion of such matters as the segregation of the socially inefficient; but the wind gave her a good deal of trouble with her hat, and she presently took it off with a gesture of wild abandon. Her hair was netted in so trimly that a tornado could hardly have ruffled it, but I expressed some fear as to what the sun might do to her complexion.

"Oh, no," said Agnes calmly. "Sunburn and tan never trouble me. Not that I should care greatly; I am not vain about my personal appearance."

"Not many of the Wyndham co-eds could say that," I observed.

"That spirit should certainly be discouraged," she said severely. "My view is that social purposes have no place in an institution of learning. Young women come to Wyndham to study."

"No, they don't," I told her. "Not many of them. Most of them come, whether they know it or not, to meet men; to browse around among a fairly large assortment of attractive young men of their own class, and pick out the ones they want."

"Why, Doctor Deupree! I never heard of such an idea."

"Perhaps not, but it's true."

"But—that is disgraceful!"

"Is there anything disgraceful about getting married?"

"Why— No. But it is disgraceful to waste one's time. I can not accept such a judgment upon the young women of Wyndham College. I know them fairly well——"

"As an outsider. You never went to college yourself."

"But—you are questioning my judgment, Doctor Deupree!"

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"Yes," I said, "that's exactly what I'm doing. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Clevenger, you may know a good deal about some things; but there are a great many things about which you know very little, if not nothing."

I was in for it now. Agnes stared at me aghast; and I turned around, rested my elbow on the back of the tonneau, and looked squarely in her eyes. I had time to notice that they were rather nice eyes before she exploded.

"Why—nobody ever said such a thing to me before!"

"Quite true. Nobody ever did. But somebody will have to some day, for the good of your soul; and it's going to begin right now. Nobody has ever denied anything you've said for years, and as a result you've got together the most astounding mass of misinformation and wrong-headed opinions that I've ever found in one human being. People all around you have bowed, and smirked, and agreed, and told you that you were right in everything. As a matter of fact, you're generally wrong. But you've demoralized all who know you, till they'd say, 'Yes, Mrs. Clevenger,' if you told them the sun rose in the south. Yet their real opinion of you was——"

"Do you mean to say," she blazed, "that because of my money——"

"Not at all, not at all. That might have influence with some persons, but not with scholars and clergymen and social workers of the type with which you come in contact. They dare not contradict you because of the force of your personality—because of your determination—your iron will—the sheer driving power of you. Your character is so strong that no one dares to oppose you; so your very strength is doing you harm."

I PAUSED to let that sink in, and it sank. "It may be true," she said presently. "I—I had never had it presented to me, but perhaps you are right. I know my character is a very strong one. You think people are withholding from me things that—that should be said?"

"I know it." There was another silence; then she gathered herself together.

"Then tell me some of them."

Agnes was a real person! But the hardest part of the work was ahead of me; I cleared my throat, and tried to look dependable and Deupreeish.

"No one," I said, "has ever told you that you are beautiful."

She looked away, and presently said in a weak voice;

"But I am not."

"At this moment," I agreed, "you are not. But you ought to be. You've such wonderful possibilities, if you only let yourself use them. Why don't you go to a real hairdresser, a real costumer, a real corsetière? Why don't you powder that Grecian nose when it's shiny, and take off those high collars from a neck like a tower of ivory, and give your soul a chance to breathe?"

"Oh, Doctor Deupree!" she gasped.

"Really beautiful women are few," I assured her fervently. "And there is so much ugliness and sorrow in the world that people who have this divine gift of beauty have no right to—to tie it up in a napkin and bury it."

This was a wrong tack, despite the Scriptural allusion; she spoke up rather spiritedly.

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"I desire to be known rather for the beauty of my character."

"Has any one told you the two can not go together?"

"They don't very often," she said severely. "Too much thought of the outward appearance, too much pride of the flesh, leads to forgetfulness of the earnest side of life. It is my wish to be a useful woman."

"And your beauty," I suggested, "will help you attain the highest usefulness. A woman interested in social movements must work with men; and believe me, Mrs. Clevenger, as a man of the world"—that was pretty raw, but it seemed to impress her—"when I tell you that there are men who, rightly or wrongly, will allow their better impulses to be awakened by a beautiful woman, when one who gives no thought to other than moral considerations is—ah—overlooked. It is your duty to use all your gifts in furtherance of your high purpose.

"Why, Mrs. Clevenger, consider this conference which you and I are soon to attend. There will be men there who know you; there will be others who do not. There will also be noble women of great wealth and personal charm. Would you want them to outstrip you in possibilities of doing good? If you should utilize your days in New York to visit some of the shops on Fifth Avenue, you could go up to Maplecrest in the serene confidence that you would be a striking and impressive figure, able to exert the highest influence. You owe this to yourself."

AND then there was a long, heavy silence, while Agnes inspected the landscape and I studied the back of the driver's neck. It was an awful chance that I had taken; her reaction might ruin any possibility of doing anything with her. But it was quite plain that I had put thoughts into her mind that had never been there before. And if she took my advice, after she'd once looked into a glass I'd have a hold on her that couldn't be won by a hundred years of "yes-quite-true-Mrs. Clevenger."

In which case—I stole a sidewise glance at her. Somehow the wind had loosened a strand or two of golden hair, and it blew around her ears rather skittishly. An expert could make that Valkyrie figure a thing of beauty. And that smooth, curving cheek; it was fascinating to look at; it must be cool and comfortable—

Out of my plot for the protection of Wyndham College there rose an unforeseen emotion. I desired to kiss Mrs. Clevenger.

And that sudden impulse brought, a moment later, a realization that my tactics might conceivably get me into complications. If this Galatea really came to life she would be a good deal harder to handle than the consecrated woman whom Goodhue had entursted to my care. It had been my observation that when that kind got started it traveled with great rapidity; I might have to hurry to keep up with her.

But I didn't care; I was a Gaylord at that moment, and willing to get my feet wet. So I waited till at last she turned with a heavy sigh and looked at me rather sadly.

"Am I really beautiful?" she asked.

I felt like giving the college yell.

CHAPTER FOUR

An Introduction

SO AGNES was to see New York, and New York was to see Agnes. As she studied the sky-line from the upper deck of the ferryboat, I thought I could see a light in her eye that had not been there when we started out from Asbury Park; and I knew, though she didn't, that she was going to discover things she had never heard of. But that was still to come. Eventually, when she and her trunk were deposited in the lobby of the Hotel Susan B. Anthony, for women only, I made some suggestion about seeing her later——

"Not to-day," she said. "I think I shall spend to-day in shopping." I had a momentary panic over the prospect of Agnes left to her own choice, with all New York to choose from and no mother to guide her, so I suggested that perhaps some of the women she knew might be able to make some suggestions.

"No," said Agnes thoughtfully. "Few of them are much concerned with their personal appearance. And none of them have ever made any suggestions as to mine. Perhaps we had better let this affair remain—well—just between us, you know."

There was something pathetic in that, I thought; I was used to having girls come to me for advice on points of etiquette that they might have learned from their brothers, but I had never been asked to be a sister to anybody. Besides, there was a suggestion of intimacy and confidence that rather troubled me; it was apparent that as I had started this, Agnes was going to rely on me to tell her whether she was doing it right.

Edith could have been very useful just then; but Edith's idea of family obligation worked in only one direction. However, I knew some of the places where she bought her clothes, so I gave Agnes a list; I was confident that since her own taste was only negative, she would be reasonably safe in the hands of saleswomen who had been trained to bring out all the good points.

So I left, with a promise to call her up to-morrow. Things were beginning well—almost too well. For after all, Agnes was Agnes; I was making her over into something else, and people who tamper with souls must be ready to answer for it. A Deupree was always worrying about somebody's soul—his own, or another's; and I couldn't help feeling that for whatever happened to Agnes in her new character I'd be responsible.

I WAS walking up the Avenue, engrossed in these sad reflections, when something luminous drew up at the curb beside me. It was Bonner and his car—or, more accurately, the car and Bonner, his own amiable fatness was quite insignificant in this imposing machine radiant with red paint and shiny brasswork, a vehicle which did its best to look like a fire-engine.

"Goin' up-town?" he asked. "I'll take you as far as the office. Stop and have lunch with me."

I couldn't do it, for I thought I'd better write my Maplecrest speech before Agnes began to take up too much of my time; but he was quite disconsolate, and reminded me that I'd never seen his showroom.

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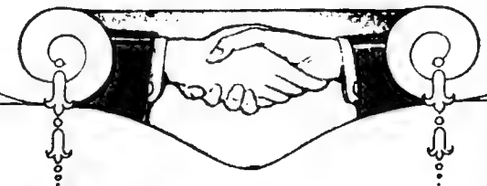

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"I may come in later in the week," I said, "and bring you a customer."

He revived at once.

"That's the stuff, doc. This is goin' to be the biggest year we ever had. Trouble is, I make my big money on commissions. More commission, more alimony; that little Blanche devil must have a spy in the office. Funny thing, doc; I met her through sellin' her a car, and now I have to pay for the upkeep of it. And that's quite an item; our car is the best on the market, but we don't expect it to do more than about four miles on a gallon. I've often wished I'd let that sale slide."

"What would you do," I asked, "if somebody made you look after two women and sixteen million dollars?"

He whistled.

"Sell 'em a Sagamore apiece to start with, I guess. But after that— Both live ones?"

"At present they're both dead ones. But they've just come to New York, and one of them already shows signs of life."

"Count on that, doc. Once they get away from the home town and the old front-porch gang they all loosen up. But do they stick together?"

"No, they've never seen each other."

"Then don't let 'em. If Elaine had never seen Blanche and Blanche had never seen Tessie I'd be spendin' my money on nobody but me and my income tax."

It appeared to be difficult to make Bonner understand my situation, so I gave up trying. But his advice stayed with me after he had dropped me at a subway station and driven away with Agnes's address in his pocket. I suppose it was a piece of base selfishness for me to give it to him, but I thought if he made good time, and Agnes's conversion proceeded with proper speed, we might spend the latter part of next week motoring over the Westchester hills instead of listening to speeches about the socially inefficient.

THE next morning I telephoned to Mrs. Clevenger. She had bought some clothes, it appeared, and meant to buy more; there was a wistful anxiety for my judgment in her voice.

"Then you'll dine with me to-night," I said, "and we'll see a play afterward." This was a bit incautious, for old Zaccheus had frowned on the drama; but Agnes was more liberal.

"I promised to dine with some Y. W. C. A. workers," she said regretfully. "But if you could call for me afterward I should be glad to see some dramatic production of the higher sort——"

"Hamlet," I said, determined to take no chances. "Meanwhile, will you have tea with me?"

She assented, rather shyly; and when I waited for her that afternoon in the lobby of the Susan B. Anthony I found myself quite agitated over the consequences of her first false step.

And, for a first step, it was quite creditable. The dress was rather severe, and not very distinguished, but an authentic piece of costuming. The businesslike boots had been replaced by black pumps—rather solid and sedate, but they fitted her; and with them she wore what I am convinced was her first pair of silk stockings. The figure was a figure now; the golden

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hair was more loosely arranged; and the hat was really charming. Altogether, while the effect was nothing that anybody would turn around to look at, it was pretty good for Agnes.

"Why didn't you do this years ago?" I demanded.

"Do you really like it? I'm afraid this hat would be quite too gay to wear at home, among those who have known me all my life; but I thought that perhaps in New York——"

"I shouldn't presume to tell you how a lady ought to dress in New York," I laughed. "You'll have to see for yourself. But you're charming."

She almost blushed at that; and as I looked at her more closely I noticed a bit of evidence that convinced me that her reformation was complete. Over one eye a white smudge marked the spot where rice powder had been inexpertly applied by an unpractised hand.

THE time was ripe for a few object lessons in matters beyond my own field of knowledge, so I took her to the tea-room of the Ritz. And when we were settled at a table I found that there was no use in wasting flowers of conversation on Agnes to-day; she was looking at the other women, and fixing things in her mind. It disturbed her, of course, to see women smoking, and drinking things that could hardly be supposed to be tea; when she wondered—and not very assertively—if her staying in the room where such things were going on might not appear as if she were countenancing such practises, might not weaken her influence with people who knew her, I reminded her that nobody who knew her was likely to see her here.

"I suppose that is true," she reflected. "This is—quite a novel experience for me. A new world. Of course I can not feel that I wholly approve of it, but I can realize that there are two points of view. The mere fact that you, Doctor Deupree, seem to be so well versed in the ways of establishments such as this—the head waiter's deference did not escape my notice—means a great deal to me. I feel sure that your father's son would never deviate from essential principles."

Agnes had never known my mother; nor did she know that an assistant professor's salary would soon break under the strain of commanding deference from head-waiters. But I was beginning to feel that she was a good investment.

We survived "Hamlet," though I am afraid Agnes didn't pay much attention to the play. The audience was rather smart, and in the theatre lounge, which tried hard to pretend it was somebody's drawing-room, she had a chance to do a good deal of observation between the acts. She still wore her costume of the afternoon, and some of the evening-gowns around us opened her eyes. At first she seemed to have some doubts of the character of the audience; what finally reassured her was the presence of a couple of clergymen in the garb of their calling, accompanied by two white-haired and offensively respectable dowagers whose *décolletage* was just a little more extreme than anything else in sight. Agnes was taking thought.

I suggested a supper after the play, but she refused.

"No, Doctor Deupree. It is very kind of

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The booklet "St. Louis as a Manufacturing Center" gives details that will be interesting to you. A letter will bring it if addressed to

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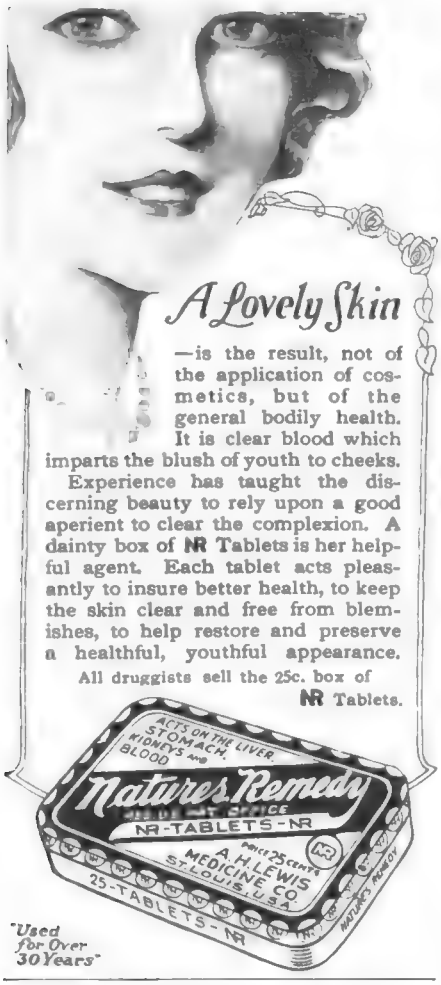
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The best way to get rid of dandruff is to dissolve it. To do this, just apply a little Liquid Arvon at night before retiring; use enough to moisten the scalp, and rub it in gently with the finger tips.

By morning, most, if not all, of your dandruff will be gone, and three or four more applications should completely remove every sign and trace of it.

You will find, too, that all itching of the scalp will stop, and your hair will look and feel a hundred times better. You can get Liquid Arvon at any drug store. A four-ounce bottle is usually all that is needed.

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you, but I am not hungry. That is, not to-night."

"Your plans for to-morrow—" I suggested.

"To-morrow I shall be very busy," she said.

"Are you going to see Doctor Gushmore?" I inquired with sudden anxiety.

"Doctor Gushmore? Why, no. I do not expect to see him before we go to Maplecrest. But I have a great deal of—of business to transact to-morrow. Thursday, perhaps——"

"You'll have dinner with me?"

"Or supper," Agnes ventured demurely.

"Then we'll make it a regular party—dinner and supper, and the theatre in between. Some modern play——"

"Yes," said Agnes. "I should like very much to see a specimen of the current drama—provided, of course, it would be what—what one ought to see. I believe there are a great many objectionable plays."

"I should never think of suggesting anything like that," I assured her; and then, since I didn't know what was running, and I was afraid Agnes might take offense at something that would leave the ordinary cheek pale, I added:

"Of course there are some plays in town with themes somewhat unpleasant, but treated in a properly serious manner. And broad-minded persons should not object to serious discussion. But I shall take care to select the sort of play that is quite unobjectionable."

"A dinner and a play," Agnes smiled. "That would be delightful. But as to supper—I suppose it is impossible to find a—a supper restaurant where there is no cabaret."

"Many of the best have no cabarets," I assured her. "We can easily avoid them."

She considered.

"Doctor Deupree, do you think it would be all right? Do you think I can appear to—to compromise with ideals and still retain my influence for good? Of course, the mere fact that you should suggest taking me to a cabaret indicates that it is possible for a serious-minded person—And I suppose one can not go anywhere in New York without encountering a great deal of wickedness."

"It is possible to be in the world and not of it, Mrs. Clevenger."

"I think there is a great deal in that point of view," she said earnestly. "I shouldn't want you to suppose that I could think that there is any difference in standards in a large city. Right is right, and wrong is wrong. But I feel that it is difficult to reach one's full usefulness unless one—er—knows conditions, if you understand me."

"Entirely, Mrs. Clevenger. I am sure nobody could misinterpret your presence at a cabaret."

"Besides," she added, "as you say, there are a good many things that you wouldn't do at home, but that would be all right in New York, where nobody you knew would see you. I shall look forward to Thursday evening."

WELL, it was a good beginning. I had a long start over Gushmore, and I was interested in the game for itself by now. Developing my Galatea was as fascinating as producing a work of art; for Agnes might be a work of art after a little more care had been expended on her. It was a joy to see her growing into a person, and a beautiful person, before my eyes. Though there were drawbacks. She had a habit of picking up some remark of mine and carrying it about eight times as far as I had intended—all with an "as you have said, Doctor Deupree." Some day, I resolved, when I was firmly established in her confidence, I would tell her a few things for her own good; but that time was not yet.

However, I was sufficiently satisfied to sleep till eleven the next morning; then the telephone woke me. It was Edith.

"Alec, can't you come to lunch? I don't want to take you away from your book, but this is really quite important."

Her affairs always were, but I didn't have the courage to tell her so.

"What is it?" I inquired cautiously.

"It's about Hazel."

Hazel! Good Lord! Agnes was enough at one time. Still, Agnes was busy to-day.

"What's the matter with Hazel?"

"Nothing's the matter with her. But I wanted to explain some of the things you'll have to do."

It was easier to yield than argue. At any rate, Edith would be gone before long; and Hazel and her twelve million dollars would be a good deal better off in the hands of a large, competent bank than in mine. I had some hopes that this would appeal to Hazel too.

So presently I found myself in the subway on the way to Edith's. It was no pleasant trip on a summer day; and it became more unpleasant when I looked at the evening paper I'd picked off a newsstand. On the front page was a double-column head which rose up and shouted for my attention.

TWELVE-MILLION-DOLLAR BEAUTY HAS A WICKED WESTERN WALLOP

Nevada Heiress Knocks Broadway Masher Through Haberdasher's Window.

Out of the hot sands of the desert has come the best-looking lightweight who ever performed before a New York audience. The new champion is the nineteen-year-old Miss Hazel Deming, of Tonopah, Nevada, who, according to the most reliable estimates of the fortune left by her father, the late Jesse Deming, millionaire mining king, is worth about $12,000,000 in her own right; and the victim of her exhibition yesterday afternoon when she delivered a knockout in the first round before a crowd of Times Square pedestrians, was William Bone, who told Lieutenant Horgan of the West Forty-seventh Street police station that he was a writer of motion picture scenarios, living in Nutley, N. J.

Reporters who called at Miss Deming's apartment at the Plaza were ordered out by a woman who would not give her name, but said that she was Miss Deming's chaperon; and William Bone can't give his version of the affair, for his face won't work this morning. But neutral observers say it was something like this:

Miss Deming, who according to different eye-witnesses looks like a dream of heaven, a sun-kissed peach, a blue-eyed bearcat, or twelve million dollars, was strolling up Broadway alone, looking in the windows and paying no attention to passers-by. In front of the store of Levine Brothers, haberdashers, she was accosted by Bone.

"Glad to see you again," said Willie, raising his bangkok with a welcoming smile.

"Oh, are you?" said Hazel grimly. With that she swung out a lithe right arm and slapped him, first on one cheek and then on

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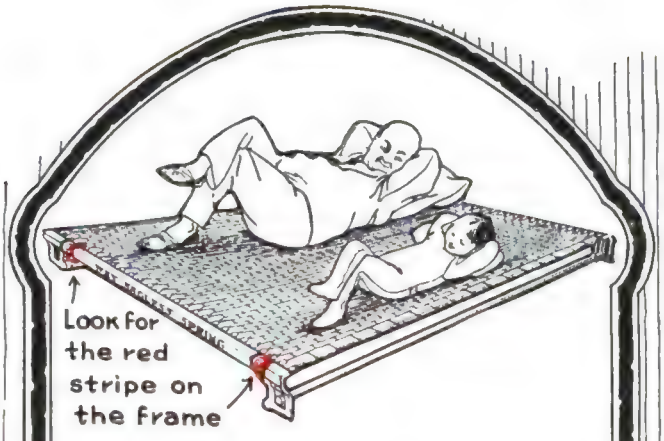

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the other. Up in Columbus Circle and down in Madison square tired business men sat up at their desks and asked each other: "Did you hear that? Sounded as if something broke."

Nothing was broken yet, but the break came in a hurry. Bone grabbed her hand, according to bystanders, and was preparing to hit her back. But his horseshoe scarfpin didn't help him. While he was holding her right hand, Hazel from the desert landed two left jabs on his jaw, and as he let go with a howl, she followed with a right swing that sent him clear through Levine Brothers' show-window. The crash of broken glass awoke Patrolman Jones, who arrested Bone, despite Miss Deming's assertion that she didn't want to make a complaint against him—she only wanted another chance to hit him. After being attended by Dr. Rosenberg of Poly-clinic Hospital, who treated him for contusions and lacerations, Bone was fined $10 in the West Side Court.

Miss Deming looked into the store and told them to send her the bill for the window, but Harry Levine said that he'd paid twenty dollars for a ringside seat to see worse exhibitions than that, and that the window was a gift.

I felt that Edith had conveyed to me a rather inadequate impression of this Hazel. She seemed to be no person who could be entertained by way of afterthought. Could she be entertained at all? If she liked me, and I failed to show her enough attention, she'd probably break my jaw; if she didn't like me——

The only bright spot was the effect it must have had on Edith. I could even forgive her for waking me up, for her idea of absolutely irretrievable misfortune was to do something that would get into the papers.

CHAPTER FIVE
A Bit of the Town

I'D EXPECTED to find Edith in the drawing-room. She wasn't there, but somebody else was there, looking over a sports magazine. It was a girl in a panama hat, and a green sports coat, and a white skirt—a rather ordinary looking girl, whom I couldn't have identified if Edith hadn't swept in from the opposite door at that moment.

"Why, Hazel! Why, Alec! My dear, I'm so glad you've dropped in. This is my cousin Doctor Deupree, of whom you've heard so much."

And this was Hazel, of whom I had read too much. I hadn't expected Hazel; I wanted to run away. But—on looking her over, I was in favor of Hazel. She didn't look like an Amazon, or a sunset, or any of the things the paper had called her; she was fresh and self-possessed, with nothing unusual about her except deep hazel eyes that nursed a flicker of some private amusement to which outsiders were not invited. I was clasping the very hand that had smitten William Bone; it might be gifted with a wicked Western wallop, but it felt cool and harmless enough. However, there was something rather exceptional in the easy, steely grace of her movements; there must have been years of athletics and eurhythmics behind that.

I suppose I must have been staring rather inanely, for Hazel smiled.

"I see Doctor Deupree's heard of me, too, but I'm not really so bad as that."

"Bad as what?" asked Edith. "What in the world are you talking about?"

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I took the paper out of my pocket.

"Oh, I didn't see that one," said Hazel. "But they were all pretty lurid. Do you mind if I read it over your shoulder, Mrs. Torrey?" And she subsided smoothly on the arm of Edith's chair and read it with a bubbling smile of honest enjoyment.

But Edith didn't enjoy it. She turned white, and groaned, and muttered, and passed her hand over her forehead, and finally flung the paper away with—

"Oh, my poor child! This is— What in the world are we to do?"

"I don't mind it," said Hazel, slipping into the nearest chair. "It happened, and pretty much like that. Except that my eyes aren't blue; and I got a bill for the window this morning."

"But what a perfectly outrageous article! My dear, why in the world did you——"

"Why, he was fresh," Hazel explained. "You didn't suppose I'd stand for anything like that, did you? I wish the policeman hadn't come along."

"I was afraid of this," Edith muttered. "I was afraid of this. Something that would get into the papers. Well, it's fortunate you haven't met anybody yet. Perhaps by autumn——"

"Why is it so bad?" Hazel asked. "I don't do things like that in the parlor. And anyway, what's the difference? I think it was kind of funny. Sarah Whitlow was funnier still, with the reporters. I hid behind the curtain and listened to her. Besides, I shouldn't think people in New York would remember things like that very long, with so much else to remember."

Edith shook her head cheerlessly.

"My dear, that is the sort of thing that sticks. Maddening, these newspapers. What are we coming to? But come, stay to lunch; perhaps we can forget it."

THE lunch was more successful than might have been expected, with that calamity weighting Edith down. I noticed that Hazel was wearing the pin of the sorority to which I'd been loyal through four stormy years at Wyndham—Lucile's sorority. It developed that she had spent last year at Stanford, and knew two or three old Wyndham girls who had settled on the coast. With this foundation we got along fairly well; but I couldn't be sure of her even yet.

"I'm so glad you two happened to meet to-day," said Edith. "Did I tell you, Alec? Harmon and I are going out to Southampton for a few days to the Digbys'. I want you to look after Hazel while we're out of town."

"I'm afraid I can't do much this week," I warned her. "I'm going to a learned conference up at Maplecrest. I'm down for a speech on Monday. After it's over I'd be delighted——"

"Oh, of course, I know you have so many obligations. But do you have to be there every day?"

I was beginning to be afraid that Hazel would think I preferred a holiday in Westchester to her company in New York; so I decided to tell the truth.

"I have to be there. I've been commissioned to look after a widow—a Mrs. Clevenger—who's given a good deal of money to Wyndham." And seeing that this bald statement had perhaps created some misapprehension, I hastily expanded it.

"You remember my father's troubles,

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Edith. The college always needed money. They're afraid this lady might fall into the hands of somebody who'd bleed her for some uplift scheme; so they asked me to keep her out of harm's way."

"What a ridiculous idea!" said Edith. "I never heard of such a thing."

"I'd do anything for Wyndham, of course," I explained. "After the conference I hope to be able to see Miss Deming often; but just now——"

"For goodness' sake don't bother about it," said Hazel. "It's all right. I'm not used to taking busy people's time, and I can amuse myself. But I suppose it will be pretty ghastly for you, being nice to the old lady."

I let that stand uncorrected. Edith had never met Agnes, and Hazel wasn't likely to meet her. Under the circumstances, the older my widow might seem to be, the better.

Then Edith excused herself; she had to go to a meeting of some committee. But she observed benignly:

"Don't think you two have to go. Stay here if you want to, and get acquainted."

Hazel thought it over.

"No, I guess I'd better go home. But I'm not running away from you, Doctor Deupree. I thought I'd walk down through the Park. Would you like to come with me?"

WE strolled out into the sunshine of a brilliant afternoon and along the shady paths inside the Park wall. Hazel took off her panama, uncovering a mass of fluffy brown hair, and presently we came to a bench where she suggested we might loaf a while.

And when she had me well benched, she asked with sudden and inescapable directness:

"Did Mrs. Torrey tell you to take care of me this summer?"

"She— Why, she asked me to do anything I could to help you get settled; she expressed some hope that we might be able to amuse each other."

"Is that all?"

"Isn't it enough?" I evaded. "Why?"

"I wondered," said Hazel. "She kept talking about you so much that I knew she had something on her mind; and she's been giving me so much advice herself that I felt sure she wouldn't leave me alone when she went to China."

I stared into the flickering hazel eyes for a while; and then—

"Knowing Edith," I said, "I feel sure that in calling it advice you're not overstating it. You must have looked forward to me with some alarm."

"Mrs. Torrey isn't very good at descriptions," Hazel admitted. "I supposed you were at least fifty-five."

"Did she tell you I was dependable?"

Hazel grinned. Yes, grinned is the only word; but it was a pleasant grin.

"That was one of the things she said about you."

"What else?"

Hazel considered, her fingers twisting in her hat brim.

"Oh, I wish I knew you better," she flung out suddenly. "I—oh, well, I'll take a chance. If we're not the same kind we might as well find it out. Why, she said that coming from the country I might be dazzled by the glitter of New York life, and that I mustn't go anywhere with anybody she hadn't had a chance to look over. I couldn't see that. And then she said that if I was determined to play around, I'd better do all my frivoling with you; because if you were with me I could stay out till sunrise, and she'd know I was safe."

"She said that, did she?" I barked. "Why—" And then the Gaylord blood came to the surface, and I laughed. And Hazel heaved a sigh of relief and laughed too.

"I knew we belonged to the same lodge," she cried. "Now tell me some of the things Mrs. Torrey told you to make me do."

"There was quite a good deal," I admitted, "but I think we can forget about it. You don't seem to need much protection against our city."

Hazel sniffed.

"I suppose you think your city needs protection against me; if you'd believe what some of the papers said, you'd be afraid I'd wake up with a grouch some morning and go down and push the army off Governor's Island. I'm not as bad as that, but I can take care of myself. If your ravening wolves of the wicked city aren't any better than the one I punched yesterday, I don't need a bodyguard." She got up and put on her hat. "Come on. Let's walk."

I thought this over as we emerged from the Park and started down a street covered with loose planking, where tool shanties blocked the view on every side, and the rattle of drills boring through rock in the new subway cut drifted up from under our feet. It wasn't a pleasant thoroughfare, and we might as well have crossed to the intact pavement on the other side; but we were too much engrossed in our discussion.

"Give us a chance," I pleaded. "You wrong our city. There are probably a few men, even on the decadent Atlantic seaboard, who could pick up a blue-eyed bearcat, if they felt like it, and carry her off under one arm. But they don't do it. We are easy-going. Not all of us are up to sudden emergencies in New York. It isn't necessary. Life here is tame and peaceable and free from violence—"

Neither of us had paid any particular attention to the grimy man waving a red flag a few yards ahead; but my remark was cut in two at that moment by a banging blast in the cut below us. The loose planking over the excavation swayed and clattered; a violent blow on the soles of our feet lifted us both a little off the wooden roadway; and when we came down it wasn't there. It was dropping into the cut about three inches ahead of us; and through a break in the planking I looked down into a chasm a good forty feet deep. I had time to wonder if I would linger in the hospital or be lucky enough to break my neck, before my fall stopped abruptly, and I was mashed between something hard and solid that I'd dropped into, and something heavy that had dropped into me.

"I'll Show You the Town" *will be continued in the October* EVERYBODY'S

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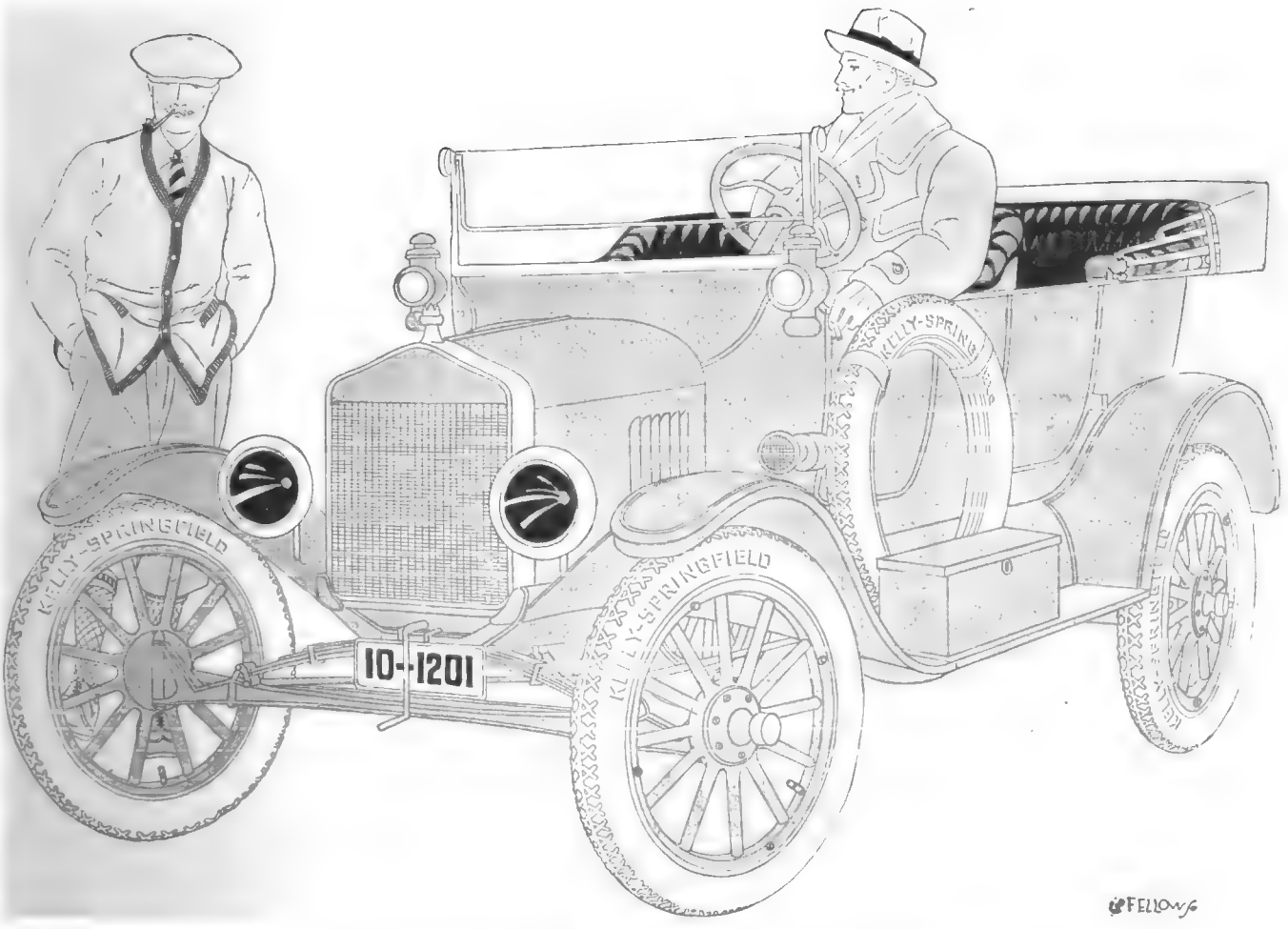

"Pretty good-looking little car, Jimmy, but aren't those tires rather expensive?"

"Expensive? Not at all. Don't you know that a set of Kelly-Springfields will give me from fifteen to twenty thousand miles on this car?"

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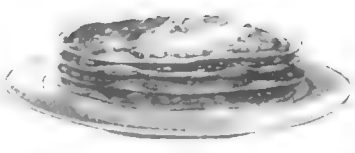

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3367

IN RED *and* GOLD

(*Continued from page 16*)

civilization of the Han dynasty, when disciplined Chinese armies kept open the overland route to Bactria and Parthia, that the silks and porcelains and pearls might travel safely to waiting Roman hands; to the later, richer, riper centuries of T'ang and Sung, after Rome fell, when Chinese civilization stood alone, a majestic fabric in an otherwise crumbled and chaotic world — when landscapes and portraits among the noblest ever painted were finding expression, when philosophers held high dreams of building conflicting dogmas into a single structure of comprehensive and serene faith. The Chinese alone, down the uncounted centuries, had held their racial integrity, their very language. Surely, at some mystical but seismic turning of the racial tide, they would rise again among the nations.

This giant, standing there in sweater and knickerbockers, bareheaded, gazing out at the dark river, was not sentimentalizing. He knew well enough the present problems. But he saw them with half-Eastern eyes; he saw America, too, with half-Eastern eyes—and so he could not talk at all to the very able man beside him who saw the West and the world with wholly Western eyes. No, it was futile. Even when the great New-Yorker, who had just won two thousand dollars, gold, spoke with wholly unexpected kindness, the gulf between their two minds remained unfathomable.

"I want you to forgive me, sir—I do not even know your name, you see—but, frankly, you interest me. You are altogether too much of a man for the work you are doing here. That is clear. I would be glad to have you tell me what the trouble is. Perhaps I could help you."

This from the man who held General Railways in the hollow of his hand, and Universal Hydro-Electric, and Consolidated Shipping, and the Kane, Wilmarth & Cantey banks, a chain that reached literally from sea to sea, across the great young country that worshiped the shell of political freedom as insistently as the Chinese worshiped their ancestors, yet gave over the newly vital governing power of finance into wholly irresponsible private hands.

The situation, grotesque in its beginning, seemed now incredible to Doane. He drew a hand across his brow, then spoke, with compelling courtesy but with also a dismissive power that the other felt:

"You are very kind, Mr. Kane. At some other time I shall be glad to talk with you. But my hours are rather exacting, and I am very tired."

"Naturally. You have given a wonderful exhibition of what a man of character can do with his body. I wish I had you for a physical trainer. And I wish the example might start my boy to thinking more wholesomely. Good night." And he extended a friendly hand.

VI

MR. KANE'S boy presented himself on the following morning as an acute problem. He was about the deck, shortly after breakfast, playing with the Manchu child. Then, after eleven, Captain Benjamin handed his mate a note that had

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been scribbled in pencil on a leaf torn from a pocket note-book and folded over. It was addressed—

"To the Chinese Lady who spoke English last night."

And the content was as follows:

"I shouldn't have been rude, but I must see you again. Can't you slip around the canvas this evening, late? I'll be watching for you." There was no signature.

"Make it out?" asked the captain. "Old T'ang sent it up to me, asks us to speak to the young man. But how'm I to know which young man it is?"

"Do you know how it was sent?"

"Yes, the little princess took it back."

"It won't be hard to find the man."

"You know?"

"I think so."

"Well, just put him wise, will you?"

"I'll speak to him."

"Wait a minute! You thinking of young Kane?"

The mate inclined his head.

"Well—you know who he is, don't you? Who they are?"

Doane nodded again.

"Better use a little tact."

DOANE walked back along the deck to cabin sixteen. A fresh breeze blew sharply here; the chairs had all been moved across to the other side where the sunlight lay warm on the planking. Within the social hall the second engineer—a wistful, shy young Scot—had brought his battered talking-machine to the dining-table and was grinding out a comic song. Two or three of the men were in there, listening, smoking and sipping highballs; Doane saw them as he passed the door. Through the open but shuttered window of cabin number twelve came the clicking of a typewriter and men's voices; that would be Mr. Kane, discussing his "autobiography" with its author.

Before number sixteen, Doane paused; sniffed the air. A curious odor was floating out through these shutters, an odor that he knew. He sniffed again; then abruptly knocked at the door.

A drowsy voice answered: "What is it? What do you want?"

"I must see you at once," said Doane.

There was a silence, then odd sounds—a faint rattling of glass, a scraping, cupboard doors opening and closing. Finally the door opened a few inches. There was Rocky Kane, hair tousled, coat, collar and tie removed, and shirt open at the neck.

Doane looked sharply at his eyes; the pupils were abnormally small. And the odor was stronger now and of a slightly choking tendency.

"What are you looking at me like that for?" cried young Kane, shrinking back a little way.

"I think," said Doane, "you had better let me come in and talk with you."

"What right have you got saying things like that? What do you mean?"

"I have really said nothing as yet."

Kane, seeming bewildered, uncertain, allowed the door to swing inward and himself stepped back. The big mate came stooping within.

"Your note has been returned," he said shortly, and gave him the paper.

Kane accepted it, stared down at it, then sank back on the couch.

"What's this to you!" he managed to

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He Ran Away

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cry. "What right—what do you mean, saying I wrote this?"

"Because you did. You sent it by the little girl."

"Well, what if I did! What right——"

"I am here at the request of his Excellency, the Viceroy of Nanking. You have been annoying his daughter. The fact that she chooses, while in her father's household, to wear the Manchu dress, does not justify you in treating her otherwise than as a lady. Perhaps I can't expect you to understand that His Excellency is one of the greatest statesmen alive to-day. Nor that this young lady was educated in America, knows the capitals of Europe better, doubtless, than yourself, and is a princess by birth. Incidentally, she went to school in England and to college in Massachusetts. Take my advice, and try no more of this sort of thing."

The boy was staring at him now, wholly bewildered.

"Well," he began stumblingly, "perhaps I have been a little on the loose, but what of it! A fellow has to have some fun, doesn't he?"

The mate's eyes were taking in keenly the crowded little cabin.

"Well," cried Kane, petulantly, "that's all, isn't it? I understand! I'll let her alone!"

"You don't feel that an apology might be due?"

"Apologize? To that girl?"

"To her father."

"Apologize—to a Chink?"

The word grated strangely on Doane's nerves.

Suddenly the boy cried out: "Well, that's all? There's nothing more you want to say? What are you—what are you looking like that for?"

THE sober, deep-set eyes of the mate were resting on the high dresser at the head of the berths. There, tucked away behind the water carafe, was a small lamp with a base of cloisonné work in blue and gold and a small, half globular chimney of soot-blackened glass.

"What are you looking at? What do you mean?"

The boy writhed under the steady gaze of this huge man, who rested a big hand on the upper berth and gazed gravely down at him; writhed, tossed out a protesting arm, got to his feet and stood with a weak effort at defiance.

"Now I suppose you'll go to my father!" he cried. "Well, go ahead! Do it! I don't care. I'm of age—my money's my own. He can't hurt me. And he knows I'm onto him. Don't think I don't know some of the things he's done—he and his crowd. Ah, we're not saints, we Kanes! We're good fellows—we've got pep, we succeed—but we're not saints."

"How long have you been smoking opium?" asked the mate.

"I don't smoke it! I mean I never did. Not until Shanghai. And you needn't think the pater hasn't hit the pipe a bit himself. I never saw a lamp until he took me to the big Hong dinner at Shanghai last month. They had 'em there. And it wasn't all they had, either."

"If you are telling me the truth," said the mate——

"I am. I tell you I am."

"—then you should have no difficulty in stopping. It would take a few weeks to form the habit. You can't smoke another pipe on this boat."

"But what right—Good Lord, if the pater would drag me out here, away from all my friends—you think I'm a rotter, don't you!"

"My opinion is not in question. I must ask you to give me, now, every ounce of opium you have."

"But what right——"

"Stop and think—if you can. We can't allow you to burn a lamp in here—alone—yourself under the influence of a drug. There are problems enough in getting this steamer safely up and down the river, without taking on such risks as that."

"Well—what'll you do——"

"If you don't give it to me, now, I shall bring your father here. If he declines the responsibility I shall search the room."

SULKILY, evidently dwelling in a confusion of resentful thoughts, the boy knelt at the cupboard, and got out a small cardboard box.

The mate opened it, and found several shells of opium within. He promptly pitched it out over the rail.

"This is all?" he asked.

"Well—look in there yourself!"

But the mate was looking at the suitcase, and at the trunk beneath the lower berth.

"You give me your word that you have no more?"

"That's all," said the boy.

The mate considered this answer; decided to accept it; turned to go. But the boy caught at his sleeve.

"You do think I'm a rotter!" he cried. "Well, maybe I am. Maybe I'm spoiled. But what's a fellow to do? My father's a machine—that's what he is—a ruthless machine. My mother divorced him ten years ago. She married that English captain—got the money out of father for them to live on, and now she's divorced him. Where do I get off? I know I'm overstrung, nervous. I've always had everything I want. Do you wonder that I've begun to look for something new? Perhaps I'm going to hell. I know you think so. I can see it in your eyes. But who cares!"

Doane stood a long time at the rail, thinking.

The ship's clock in the social hall struck eight bells. Faintly his outer ear caught it. It was time to join his Excellency.

Continued in the October number of EVERYBODY'S

NEMESIS HAS A BUSY DAY

In this humorous story by Berton Braley an inoffensive citizen named Perkins has his day in court. The amusing adventures of a long-suffering worm that turned with a vengeance illustrate the text: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall intimidate surly waiters, prevail over coat-room robbers, put to rout end-seat hogs, vanquish taxi bandits, and eventually inherit a large slice of the earth." A complete short story in EVERYBODY'S for October.

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THE SPY WEB

(*Continued from page 20*)

he felt instinctively that something was in the wind. Then he found his magic lantern had been in use in his absence. Then he saw the cut-up body of a rabbit. Then he broke down. And confessed.

"I did this," he said "to get out of the line and have a kushi time. But I can't keep it up any longer. The strain and the work are worse than fighting. Yes, I have been fairly hoaxing you all. There is nothing in that magic lantern—nothing more than a magic lantern with a lot of coils and wires and a dynamo tacked on to it. That's why I never let any of you touch it. As for the photographs, I drew them. Yes, spent whole nights, when I was supposed to be asleep, drawing them. The Zeppelins and the bodies. I know all about anatomy—was a doctor in Canada at one time. I spent hours and hours drawing a heart or lungs or whatever you asked me to photograph. That accounts for my having gone all to pieces physically. I hardly ever got any sleep. It was the only time I could do the thing—when all of you were out of the way. I am glad, though, mighty glad that none of your doctors ever twigged a mistake in any of those drawings! They were all copied from those surgical books you've seen upstairs. But the strain of being watched and suspected was too much. I wanted a holiday; you gave me hell. You'll remember most of my photographs used to be blanks? That was because I couldn't possibly draw all you asked me to photograph. It was also a good standby excuse to have in case any of you ever insisted on working the apparatus. I could always point to the "dud" plate and say you'd drawn a blank and that wouldn't have surprised you, seeing you were used to me drawing blanks. As for the rabbits and hens, I just gave the ones I chose for being killed a small dose beforehand. Then, to-day, when I went out—the first time I have been out for three months—I took the precaution of poisoning one rabbit and turning the others loose—just in case you did try any tricks on them in my absence. There's the whole story. I apologize for all the trouble I have given you."

I naturally give above the tenor, only, of "S's" remarks.

"S" was tried by court martial at St. Pol at Christmas, 1916, and after a trial lasting three days and in the course of which rows of highly placed officers gave evidence, was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. The court was entirely sympathetic to the prisoner, especially General Allenby, commanding the army in whose area "S" had been carrying on his experiments, and who attended the trial as a spectator. "S" only served two months of his term. He was then, at his own request, sent back to the line as a stretcher-bearer. His main crime had been to deflect for three months the time and energy of many staff officers.

"That," as some cynic observed, "was what got him off so lightly."

The Lost Haversack

ONE afternoon toward the close of October, 1917, a staff officer attached to General Headquarters in the field, Egyptian Expeditionary Force, rode out into "no man's land" in the direction of Beersheba. The distance between the Turk and the British at this desert end of the line was sometimes as great as eight miles, and frequent mounted reconnaissance patrols were necessary—the more so at this particular juncture in that Allenby's push for Jerusalem was due to start from day to day.

Followed by an orderly, the staff officer rode about for some little time, now consulting his leather-encased map, now scanning with field-glasses the unending camel scrub and sand. Suddenly—zip, zip, zip—several rifle shots rang out, and the officer half fell from his horse, then recovering himself, headed about. The couple had apparently ridden right on to a Turkish post, and the orderly needed no second word of command as to the direction in which he was now to proceed.

Before following him, however, the staff officer swung round two or three times in an effort to recover his haversack, which had dropped to the ground as he had tilted over when hit. But the Turkish fire was becoming more rapid, and he apparently was getting weaker. Finally the haversack had to be left there on the sand under the noses of the Turks.

IN THE course of the evening a G. R. O. something in this style was circulated throughout the three corps in line:

URGENT. While on reconnaissance patrol in "no man's land" this afternoon, about x21d43, a staff officer lost a haversack. If found, the haversack is to be returned forthwith to General Headquarters without being opened or its contents examined in any way.

Later an enciphered wireless message added:

Determined efforts are to be made to-night by troops in the sector involved to recover the lost haversack mentioned in G. R. O. No. 102.

That night the writer messed at a corps headquarters and was greeted somewhat after this fashion: "Oh Lord! Here's one of these confounded G. H. Q. wallahs! Nice business this afternoon! Can't go out on patrol, without giving the whole show away to the Turks! Found your blessed haversack yet? I should say not—not likely to either. The old Turk's fairly gloating over it by now. Contained the whole plan of the push, I suppose? The fellow who dropped it ought to be strung up. Prancing about up to the Turk with operation orders in his pocket!"—and so on.

While the tone was primarily one of raillery, there was nevertheless a distinct undercurrent of something not at all so pleasant. After all, this sort of thing—the staff giving the whole show away, and throwing away hundreds of lives—was hardly calculated to improve the discipline, morale, or the fighting efficiency of any force in the field.

That night, at corps headquarters out in the sandy wastes of Gaza, it was hard work "keeping one's mouth shut," sitting still hour after hour hearing bursts of

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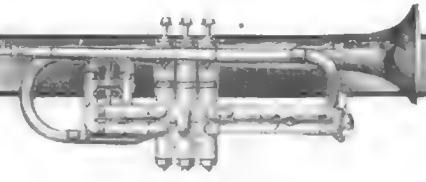

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condemnation and abuse when one sentence, one word, would have turned all that very condemnation and abuse into unbounded admiration.

For here is the true tale of the haversack dropped about x21d43, Palestine, on the afternoon of October 25, 1917.

On the Gaza front at this period, the British line extended from the coast to the vicinity of Beersheba, sixty or seventy miles inland toward the desert. In the push for Jerusalem, General Allenby's grandiose plan hinged mainly, if not entirely, on the swift and sure capture of Beersheba. Unless this capture were effected, the whole action stood in danger of fizzling out.

Well, the Turks got wind of General Allenby's plan and shortly before "Z" day—the day of our offensive—they moved a division from Gaza across into reserve at Beersheba. The move about balanced the opposing forces, numerically, in the vital Beersheba sector, and so it became absolutely necessary to do something to cause the Turks to move this division back to Gaza again or to any part of the line as long as it was away from Beersheba.

And this is how the thing was done, without any sanguinary local attack, without the loss of a single life—perhaps the strangest tale in all the war.

THE head of the enemy's intelligence service opposite was one Captain Schiller.

An intelligence service exists to find out what your opponent contemplates doing next. It behooved our Intelligence to make their Intelligence believe that there was nothing to fear in the Beersheba sector, that the vital attack was coming elsewhere. It behooved us to deceive Schiller and, through him, Kress von Kressenstein.

Scheme after scheme was weighed and found wanting and the days were slipping by. In the end, it was agreed that the one hope would be to devise a means of getting "faked" documentary evidence through to Schiller himself and so to set the stage that even that wily customer would be taken in. It would be a risk, for should Schiller decide that the information in question had been purposely conveyed to him, that, in fact, it was "dope," we had better far have left the whole affair most severely alone. But now, to bring this queer tale to a conclusion, let us reconstruct the scene in Schiller's office, as we believe it to have been enacted, that October night following the discovery of a British haversack by a Turkish patrol in "no man's land."

Schiller opens the haversack and finds inside some sandwiches, an electric torch and a flask, a map and a wallet and notebook combined. He reads intently several pages of scribbled pencil notes written in diary form, then pushes back his chair and laughs outright: "*Ha, ha! Das ist gut!* Specially dropped for us to pick up! They're getting quite clever, these English!"

"Pardon, captain, but the officer who dropped it was wounded and made several attempts to pick it up again."

Schiller glances up for a second, then, shaking his wise young head with a knowing smile, returns to the wallet. He pulls out twenty pounds sterling in notes, looks straight in front of him a moment, then: "No! They stuffed these in as part of the game!"

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A signal officer announces:

"The English have just sent out a wireless message saying that every effort is to be made to-night to recover a haversack that was lost this afternoon in 'no man's land.'"

"What's that?" raps out the German intelligence officer. The newcomer repeats the message and places a carbon copy of it on the table. Schiller gets up, waves him away, and paces the room.

"It can't be! It can't be! Don't you realize, Schmidt, that if these notes are genuine all our reckoning has been wrong, that they're going to attack at Gaza first, not at Beersheba. These notes refer to all Allenby's conferences for the past month. I'm certain they're faked. Why, look what those prisoners told us only yesterday! And their artillery preparation and wireless activity. And what our observers say. And our agents——"

"There are still some papers in the wallet, sir," says the young officer by way of answer.

"That's nothing to me!" raps the other fiercely; then, changing tone: "*Gott im Himmel!* What have we got here? And he reads:

Dear K——: Sorry we must delay our little shoot as I'm running down to Cairo for a few days' rest.

Back November 4. Yours,

E. Allenby.

Schiller looks slowly from the letter to the calendar and from the calendar to the letter. The British offensive was expected for October twenty-eighth, and here was the British commander-in-chief going away on leave.

"*Donnerwetter!*" proclaims the German, "if this isn't becoming— Yes, what is it?" this to a junior officer just entered.

"English prisoners taken at El Tugger say they were warned this afternoon about the loss of a haversack. If any one found it, he was not on any account to open it, but was to send it direct to headquarters."

Schiller doesn't answer as this further evidence of authenticity teems in. Eagerly, almost feverishly, he returns to the wallet and takes out its remaining contents—a photograph, the photograph of a woman, written across in endearing terms, and a letter.

Schiller reads the latter avidly. It tells of the birth of a first-born, of little hands and little feet—it rambles on in that tender language which only a young mother can make her own. The letter is crinkled and has been clearly read and reread a hundred times—it is a letter in a million. Its loss could only be accidental.

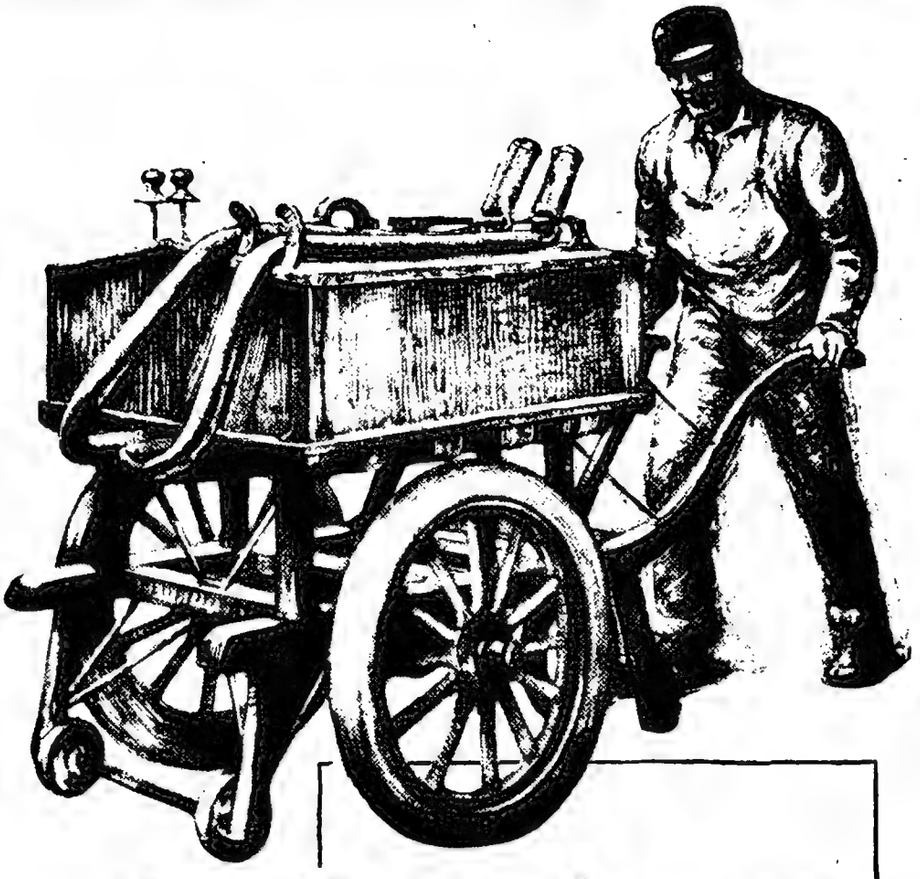
So reasons Schiller.

So reasoned Schiller.

The division that had been hastily moved into reserve at Beersheba was as hastily moved back to Gaza. On October twenty-eighth we attacked the weakened Turkish position at Beersheba and, as all the world knows, carried all before us.

And the letter concerning the first-born—the letter that saved hundreds, possibly thousands, of British lives and went far to giving the British Jerusalem and ultimately a whole country?

Has the little hospital nurse at El Arish with the girlish handwriting forgotten all about it?



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The man with the nitroglycerin buggy plays an important part in supplying the enormous force necessary to produce the coal and other minerals and metals which are the pillars of our material civilization. Look around you as you read this. Wherever you may be you will find, if you trace it back, that dynamite made possible most of the necessities and conveniences on which your eye will fall. And a very large part of the dynamite used in this country bears the name Hercules.

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HIDDEN CREEK

(*Continued from page 73*)

Swinging his gun on its strap across his shoulder, he lifted her in his arms, and like a child she was carried through the silence of the woods, all barred with blood-red glimmers from a setting sun.

CHAPTER TWELVE
The Good Old World Again

HILLIARD carried Sheila into the house that he had built for her and laid her down in that big bedroom that "got the morning sun." For a while it seemed to him that she would never open her eyes again, and when she did regain consciousness she was so prostrate with her long fear and the shock of Miss Blake's death that she lay there too weak to smile or speak, too weak almost to breathe. Hilliard turned nurse, a puzzled, anxious nurse. He would sit up in his living-room half the night, and when sleep overpowered his anxiety he would fall prone on the elk-hide rug before his fire.

At last Sheila pulled herself up and crept about the house. She spent a day in the big log chair before Hilliard's hearth, looking very wan, shrinking from speech, her soft mouth gray and drawn.

"Aren't you ever going to smile for me again?" he asked her, after a long half-hour during which he had stood as still as stone, his arm along the pine mantel-shelf, looking at her from the shelter of a propping hand.

She lifted her face to him and made a pitiful effort enough. But it brought tears. They ran down her cheeks, and she leaned back and closed her lids, but the crystal drops forced themselves out, clung to her lashes and fell down on her clenched hands. Hilliard went over to her and took the small cold hands in both of his.

"Tell me about what happened, Sheila," he begged her. "It will help."

Word by difficult word, he still holding fast to her hands, she sobbed and gasped out her story, to which he listened with a whitening face. He gripped her hands tighter then. Toward the end, he rose with a sharp oath, lit his cigaret, paced to and fro.

"God!" he said at the last. "And she told you I had gone from the country. The devil! I can't help saying it, Sheila—she tortured you. She deserved what God sent her."

"Oh, no!" Sheila rocked to and fro. "No one could deserve such dreadful terror and pain. She—she wasn't sane. I was—foolish to trust her. I am so foolish—I think I must be too young or too stupid for—for all this. I thought the world would be a much safer place." She looked up again, and speech had given her tormented nerves relief, for her eyes were much more like her own, clear and young again. "Mr. Hilliard, what shall I do with my life, I wonder? I've lost my faith and trustingness. I'm horribly afraid."

He stood before her and spoke in a gentle and reasonable tone. "I'll tell you the answer to that, ma'am," he said. "I've thought that all out while I've been taking care of you."

She waited anxiously with parted lips.

"Well, ma'am, you see—it's like this. I'm plum' ashamed of myself through and through for the way I have acted toward you. I was a fool to listen to that dern lunatic. She told me—lies about you."

"Miss Blake did?"

"Yes, ma'am." His face crimsoned under her look.

Sheila closed her eyes and frowned. A faint pink stole up into her face. She lifted her lids again and he saw the brightness of anger. "And of course, you took her lies for the truth?"

"Oh damn! Now you're mad with me and you won't listen to my plan!"

He was so childish in this outbreak that Sheila was moved to dim amusement. "I'm too beaten to be angry at anything," she said. "Just tell me your plan."

"No," he said sullenly. "I'll wait. I'm scared to tell you now!"

SHE did not urge him, and it was not till the next morning that he spoke about his plan. She had got out to her chair again and had made a pretense of eating an ill-cooked mess of canned stuff which he had brought to her on a tray. It was after he had taken this breakfast away that he broke out as though his excitement had forced a lock.

"I'm going down to Rusty to-day," he said. His eyes were shining. He looked at her boldly enough now.

"And take me?" Sheila half started up. "And take me?"

"No, ma'am. You're to stay here safe and snug." She dropped back. "I'll leave everything handy for you. There's enough food here for an army and enough fuel. You're as safe here as though you were at the foot of God's throne. Don't look like that, girl. I can't take you. You're not strong enough to make the journey in this cold, even on a sled. And we can't—" his voice sank and his eyes fell—"we can't go on like this, I reckon."

"N-no." Sheila's forehead was puckered. Her fingers trembled on the arms of her chair. "N-no." Then, with a sort of quaver she added, "Oh, why can't we go on like this?—till the snow goes and I can travel with you!"

"Because," he said roughly, "we can't. You take my word for it." After a pause he went on in his former decisive tone. "I'll be back in two or three days. I'll fetch the parson."

Sheila sat up straight.

His eyes held hers. "Yes, ma'am. The parson. I'm going to marry you, Sheila."

She repeated this like a lesson. "You are going to marry me——"

"Yes, ma'am. You'll have three days to think it over. If you don't want to marry me when the parson comes, why, you can just go back to Rusty with him." He laughed a little, came over to her, put a hand on each arm of her chair and bent down. She shrank back before him. His eyes had the glitter of a hawk's, and his red and beautiful lips were soft and eager and—again—a little cruel.

"No," he said, "I won't kiss you till I come back—not even for good-by. Then you'll know how I feel about you. You'll know that I believe that you're a good girl and, Sheila—" here he seemed to melt and falter before her. He slipped down with one of his graceful Latin movements

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and hid his forehead on her knees. "Sheila, my *darling*—that I know you are fit—oh, so much more than fit—to be the mother of my children!"

In half an hour, during which they were both profoundly silent, he came to her again. He was ready for his journey. She was sitting far back, slipped down a little in her chair, her slim legs stretched out. She raised inscrutable wide eyes to his.

"Good-by," he said softly. "It's hard to leave you. Good-by."

She said good-by even more softly, with no change in her look. And he went out, looking at her over his shoulder till the last second. She heard the voice of his skis hissing across the hard crust of the snow. She sat there stiff and still till the great wordless silence settled down again. Then she started up from her chair, ran across to the window and saw that he was indeed gone. She came storming back and threw herself down upon the hide. She cried like a deserted child.

"Oh, Cosme, I'm afraid to be alone! I'm afraid. Why did I let you go? Come back! Oh, please come back!"

It was late that night when Hilliard reached Rusty, traveling with all his young strength across the easy polished surface of the world. He was dog-tired. He went first to the saloon, then to the post-office. To his astonishment he found a letter. It was post-marked New York, and he recognized the small cramped hand of the family lawyer. He took the letter up to his bedroom in the Lander Hotel and sat on the bed, turning the square envelope about in his hands. At last he opened it.

"My dear Cosme," the lawyer had written—he had known Hilliard as a child—"it is my strong hope that this letter will reach you promptly and safely at the address you sent me. Your grandfather's death on the fifteenth instant leaves you, as you are no doubt aware, heir to his fortune, reckoned at about thirty millions. If you will wire on receipt of this and follow wire in person as soon as convenient, it will greatly facilitate arrangements. It is extremely important that you should come at once. Every day makes things more complicated in the management of the estate. I remain, with congratulations,

Sincerely your friend, ———"

THE young man sat there, dazed.

He had always known about those millions, the expectation of them had always vaguely dazzled his imagination, tampered more than he was aware with the sincerity of his feelings, with the reality of his life, but now the shower of gold had fallen all about him and his fancy stretched its eyes to take the immediate glitter.

Why, thought Hilliard, this turns life upside down. I can begin to live. I can go East. He saw that the world and its gifts were as truly his as though he were a fairy prince. A sort of confusion of highly colored pictures danced through his quick and ignorant brain. The blood pounded in his ears. He got up and prowled about the little room. It was oppressively small. He felt caged. The widest prairie would have given him scant elbow room.

He was planning his trip to the East when the thought of Sheila first struck him like a cold wave, or rather it was as if the wave of his selfish excitement had crashed against the wave of his desire for her. All was foam and confusion in his spirit. He was quite incapable of self-sacrifice—a virtue in which his free life and his temperament had given him little training. It was simply a war of impulses. His instinct was to give up nothing—to keep hold of every gift. He wanted, as he had never in his life wanted anything before, to have his fling. He wanted his birthright of experience. He had cut himself off from all the gentle ways of his inheritance and lived like a very Ishmael through no fault of his own. Now it seemed to him that before he settled down to the soberness of marriage he must take one hasty, heady, compensating draft of life, of the sort of life he might have had. He would go East, go at once. He would fling himself into a tumultuous bath of pleasure, and then he would come back to Sheila and lay a great gift of gold at her feet.

HE THOUGHT over his plans, reconstructing them. He got pen and ink and wrote a letter to Sheila. He wrote badly—a schoolboy's inexpressive letter. But he told his story and his astounding news and drew a vivid enough picture of the havoc it had wrought in his simplicity. He used a lover's language, but his letter was as cold and lumpish as a golden ingot. And yet the writer was not cold. He was throbbing and distraught, confused and overthrown, a boy of fourteen beside himself at the prospect of a holiday. It was a stolen holiday to be sure, a sort of truancy from manliness, but none the less intoxicating for that. Cosme's Latin nature was on top, Saxon loyalty and conscience overthrown. He was an egoist to his fingertips that night. He did not sleep a wink, did not even try, but lay on his back across the bed, hands locked over his hair, while "visions of sugar plums danced through his head." In the morning he went down and made his arrangements for Sheila, a little less complete perhaps than he had intended, for he met a worthy citizen of Rusty starting up the country with a sled to visit his traps, and to him he gave the letter and confided his perplexities. It was a hasty interview, for the stage was about to start.

"My wife will sure take your girl and welcome, don't even have to ask her," the kind-eyed old fellow assured Hilliard. "We'll be glad to have her for a couple of months. She'll like the kids. It'll be home for her. Yes, sir," he patted the excited traveler on the shoulder, "you pile into the stage and don't you worry any. I'll be up at your place before night and bring the lady down on my sled. Yes, sir. Pile in and don't you worry any."

Cosme wrung his hand, avoided his clear eye, and climbed up beside the driver on the stage. He did not look after the trapper. He stared ahead beyond the horses to the high white hill against a low and heavy sky of clouds.

"There's a big snow storm a-comin' down," growled the driver. "Lucky if we make the Hill to-day. A reg'lar old-timer it's a-goin' to be. And cold—ugh!"

Cosme hardly heard this speech. The gray world was a golden ball for him to spin at his will. Midas had touched the snow. The sleigh started with a jerk and a jingle. In a moment it was running lightly with a crisp, cutting noise. Cosme's thoughts outran it, leaping toward their

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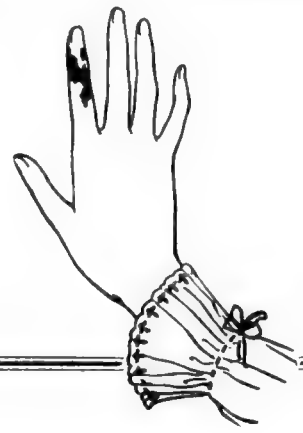

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gaudy goal—a journey out to life and a journey back to love—no wonder his golden eyes shone and his cheeks flushed.

"You look almighty glad to be going out of here," the driver made comment.

Hilliard laughed an explosive and excited laugh. "No almighty gladder than I shall be to be coming back again," he prophesied.

But to prophesy is a mistake. One should leave the future humbly on the knees of the gods. That night, when Hilliard was lying wakeful in his berth, listening to the click of rails, the old trapper lay under the driving snow. But he was not wakeful. He slept with no visions of gold or love; a frozen and untroubled sleep. He had caught his foot in a trap and the blizzard had found him there and had taken mercy on his pain. They did not find his body until spring, and then Cosme's letter to Sheila lay wet and withered in his pocket.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Loneliness

THE first misery of loneliness takes the form of a restless inability to concentrate. It is as if the victim wanted to escape from himself. After Cosme's departure, Sheila prowled about the silent cabin, began this bit of work and that, dropped it, found herself staring vaguely, listening, waiting, and nervously shook herself into activity again. She tried to whistle, but it seemed like somebody else's music and frightened her ears. At dusk she fastened sacking across the uncurtained windows, lighted both of Cosme's lamps, bringing the second from her bedroom, and heaped up a dancing and jubilant fire upon the hearth. In the midst of this illumination she sat very stiff and still in the angular elk-hide-covered chair, and knitted her hands together on her knee. Her mind was now intensely active; memories, thoughts, plans, fancies racing fast and furious like screen pictures across her brain. And they seemed to describe themselves in loud whispers. She had difficulty in keeping these voices from taking possession of her tongue.

"I don't want to talk to myself," she murmured and glanced over her shoulder.

A man has need of his fellows for a shield. Man is man's shelter from all the storm of unanswered questions.

Where am I? What am I? Why am I? No reply. No reassuring double to take away the ghost-sense of self, that unseen intangible aura of personality in which each of us moves as in a cloud. In the souls of some there is an ever-present Man-God who will forever save them from this supreme experience. Sheila's religion, vague, conventional, childish, faltered away from her soul. Except for her fire, which had a sort of sympathy of life and warmth and motion, she was unutterably alone. And she was beginning to suffer from the second misery of solitude—a sense of being many personalities instead of one. She seemed to be entertaining a little crowd of confused and argumentative Sheilas. To silence them she fixed her mind on her immediate problem.

She tried to draw Hilliard close to her heart. She had an honest hunger for his warm and graceful beauty, for his young strength, but this natural hunger continually shocked her. She tried not to remember

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the smoothness of his neck as her half-conscious hands had slipped away from it that afternoon when he raised her from the snow. It seemed to her that her desire for him was centered somewhere in her body. Her mind remained cool, detached critical, even hostile. She disliked the manner of his wooing—not that there should have been any insult to the pride of a nameless little adventurer, Hudson's barmaid, a waif, in being told that she was a good girl and fit to be the mother of this young man's children. But Sheila knew instinctively that these things could not be said, could not even be thought of, by such a man as Marcus Arundel. She remembered his words about her mother. Sheila wanted with a great longing to be loved like that, to be so spoken of, so exquisitely entreated.

A phrase in Hudson's letter came to her mind, "I handled you in my heart like a flower." Unconsciously she pressed her hand against her lips, remembered the taste of whisky and of blood. If only it had been Dickie's lips that had first touched her own! Blinding tears fell. The memory of Dickie's comfort, of Dickie's tremulous restraint, had a strange poignancy. Why was he so different from all the rest? So much more like her father? What was there in this pale little hotel clerk who drank too much, that lifted him out and up into a sort of radiance? Her memory of Dickie was always white—the whiteness of that moonlight of their first, of that dawn of their last, meeting. He had had no chance in his short unhappy and restricted life—not half the chance that young Hilliard's life had given him—to learn such delicate appreciations, such tenderness, such reserves. Where had he got his delightful gentle whimsicalities, that sweet impersonal detachment that refused to yield to stupid angers and disgusts? He was like—in Dickie's own fashion she fumbled for a simile.

But there was no word. She thought of a star, that morning star he had drawn her over to look at from the window of her sitting-room. Perhaps the artist in Sylvester had expressed itself in this son he so despised; perhaps Dickie was, after all, Hudson's great work. All sorts of meanings and symbols pelted Sheila's brain as she sat there, exciting and fevering her nerves.

IN THREE days, Hilliard would be coming back. His warm youth would again fill the house, pour itself over her heart. After the silence, his voice would be terribly persuasive, after the loneliness, his eager golden eyes would be terribly compelling. He was going to "fetch the parson." Sheila actually wrung her hands. Only three days for this decision and, without a decision, that awful helpless wandering, those dangers, those rash confidences of hers. "O God, where are you? Why don't you help me now?" That was Sheila's prayer. It gave her little comfort, but she did fall asleep from the mental exhaustion to which it brought at least the relief of expression.

When she woke, she found the world a horrible confusion of storm. It could hardly be called morning—a heavy flying darkness of drift, a wind filled with icy edges that stung the face and cut the eyes, a wind with the voice of a driven saw. The little cabin was caught in the whirling

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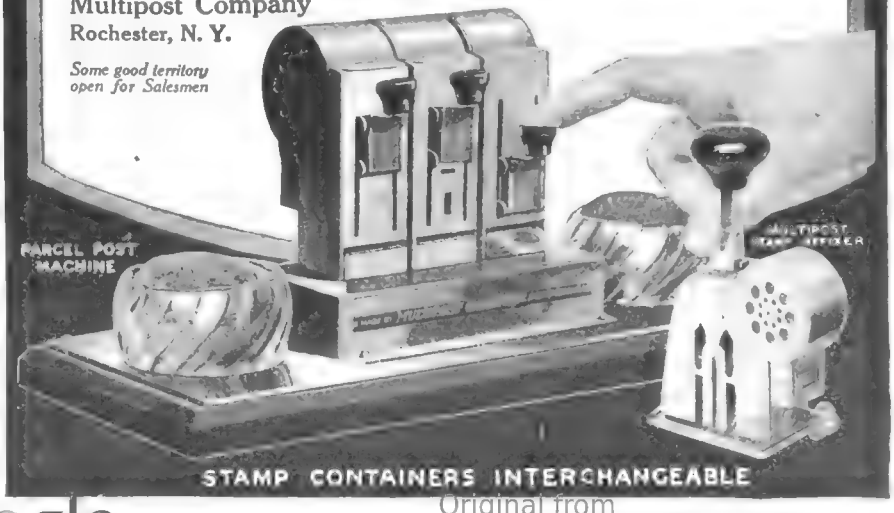

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heart of a snowspout twenty feet high. The firs bent and groaned. There is a storm-fear, one of the inherited instinctive fears. Sheila's little face looked out of the whipped windows with a pinched and shrinking stare. She went from window to hearth, looking and listening, all day. A drift was blown in under the door and hardly melted for all the blazing fire. That night she couldn't go to bed. She wrapped herself in blankets and curled herself up in the chair, nodding and starting in the circle of the firelight.

FOR three terrible days the world was lost in snow. Before the end of that time Sheila was talking to herself, and glad of the sound of her own hurried little voice. Then, like God, came a beautiful stillness and the sun. She opened the door on the fourth morning, and saw above the fresh soft ascending dazzle of the drift a sky that laughed in azure, the green snow-laden firs, a white and purple peak. She spread out her hands to feel the sun and found it warm. She held it like a friendly hand. She forced herself that day to shovel, to sweep, even to eat. Perhaps Cosme would be back before night. He and the parson would have waited for the storm to be over before they made their start. She believed in her own excuses for five uneasy days and then she believed in the worst of all her fears. She had a hundred to choose from—Cosme's desertion, Cosme's death. One day she spent walking to and fro with her nails driven into her palms.

Late that night the white world dipped into the still influence of a full white moon. Before Hilliard's cabin the great firs caught the light with a deepening flush of green, their shadows fell in even lavender tracery, delicate and soft, across the snow, across the drifted roof. The smoke from the half-buried chimney turned to a moving silver plume across the blue of the winter-night sky—intense and warm as though it reflected an August lake.

The door of the cabin opened with a sharp thrust and Sheila stepped out. She walked quickly through the firs and stood on the edge of the open range-land, beyond and below which began the dark ridge of the primeval woods. She stood perfectly still and lifted her face to the sky. For all the blaze of the moon the greater stars danced in radiance. Their constellations sloped nobly across her dazzled vision. She had come very close to madness and now her brain was dumb and dark as though it had been shut into a blank-walled cell. She stood with her hands hanging. She had no will nor wish to pray. The knowledge had come to her that if she went out and looked this winter Pan in the face, her brain would snap, either to life or death. It would burst its prison. She stared, wide-eyed, dry-eyed, through the immense cold height of air up at the stars.

All at once a door flew open in her soul and she knew God—no visible presence and yet an enveloping reality, the God of the savage earth, of the immense sky, of the stars, the God unsullied and untempted by man's worship; no God that she had ever known, had ever dreamed of, had ever prayed to before. She did not pray to Him now. She let her soul stand open till it was filled as were the stars and the earth with light.

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The next day Sheila found her voice and sang at her work. She gave herself an overwhelming task of cleaning and scrubbing. She was on her knees like a charwoman, sniffing the strong reek of suds, when there came a knocking at her door. She leaped up with pounding heart. But the knocking was more like a scraping and was followed by a low whine. For a second Sheila's head filled with a fog of terror, and then came a homely little begging bark, just the throaty snuffling sob of a homeless puppy. Sheila took Cosme's six-shooter, saw that it was loaded, and standing in the shelter of the door she slowly opened it. A few moments later, the gun lay a yard away on the soapy steaming floor, and Berg was held tight in her arms. His ecstasy of greeting was no greater than her ecstasy of welcome. She cried and laughed and hugged and kissed him. That night after a mighty supper he slept on her bed across her feet. Two or three times she woke and reached her hand down to caress his rough thick coat. The warmth of his body mounted from her feet to her heart. She thought that he had been sent to her by that new God. As for Berg, he had found *his* God again, the taming touch of a small human hand.

IT WAS in May—one morning in May—she had long ago lost count of her days—when Sheila stepped across her sill and saw the ground. Just a patch it was, no bigger than a table-cloth, but it made her catch her breath. She knelt down and ran her hands across it, sifted some gravel through her fingers. How strange and various and colorful were the atoms of stone, rare as jewels to her eyes so long used to the white and violet monotony of snow. Beyond the gravel at the very edge of the drift a slender crescent of green startled her eyes, and—yes—there were a dozen valorous little golden flowers, as flat and round as fairy doubloons.

Attracted by her cry, Berg came out, threw up his nose and snuffed. Spring spoke loudly to his nostrils. There was sap, rabbits were about—all of it no news to him. Sheila sat down on the sill and hugged him close. The sun was warm on his back, on her hands, on the boards beneath her.

"May—May—May—" she whispered, and up in the firs quite suddenly, as though he had thrown reserve to the four winds, a bluebird repeated her—"May—May—May." On three notes, high, low and high again, a little musical stumble of delight. It had begun again—that whistling away of winter fear and winter hopelessness.

The birds sang and built, and the May flies crept up through the snow and spun silver in the air for a brief dazzle of life. The sun was so warm that Berg and Sheila dozed on their door-sill. They did little else these days but dream and doze and wait.

The snow melted from underneath, sinking with audible groans of collapse and running off across the frozen ground to swell Hidden Creek. The river roared into a yellow flood, tripped its trees, sliced at its banks. Sheila snow-shoed down twice a day to look at it. It was a sufficient barrier, she thought, between her and the world. And now she had attained to the savage joy of loneliness. She dreaded change. Above all she dreaded Hilliard. That warmth of his beauty had

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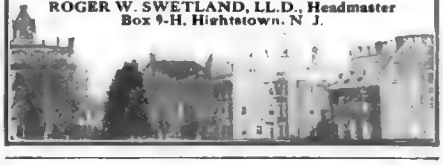

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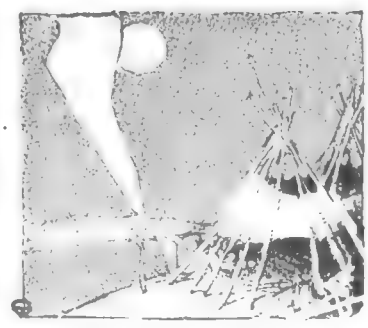

faded utterly from her senses. It seemed as faint as a fresco on a long-buried wall. Intrusion must bring anxiety and pain, it might bring fear. She had had long communion with her stars and the God whose name they signaled. She, with her dog friend under her hand, had come to something very like content.

The roar of Hidden Creek swelled and swelled. After the snow had shrunk into patches here and there under the pines and against hilly slopes, there was still the melting of the mountain glaciers.

"Nobody can possibly cross," Sheila exulted. "A man would have to risk his life." And it was in one of those very moments of her savage self-congratulation when there came the sound of nearing hoofs.

She was sitting on her threshold watching the slow darkness, a sifting down of ashes through the still air. It was so very still that the little new moon hung there above the firs like faint music. Silver and gray and silver and green and violet—Sheila named the delicacies of dappled light. The stars had begun to shake little splinters of radiance through the firs. They were softer than the winter stars—their keenness melted by the warm blue of the air. Sheila sat and held her knees and smiled. The distant increasing tumult of the river, so part of the silence that it seemed no sound at all, lulled her. Then above it the beat of horse's hoofs.

At first she just sat empty of sensation except for the shock of those faint thuds of sound. Then her heart began to beat to bursting; with dread, with a suffocation of suspense. She got up, quiet as a thief. The horse stopped. There came a step, rapid and eager. She fled like a furtive shadow into the house, fell on her knees there by the hearth and hid her face against the big hide-covered chair. Her eyes were full of cold tears. Her finger-tips were ice. She was shaking, shuddering rather, from head to foot. The steps had come close, had struck the threshold. There they stopped. After a pause, which her pulses filled with shaken rhythm, her name was spoken. So long it had been since she had heard it that it fell on her ear like a foreign speech.

"Sheila! Sheila!"

She lifted her head sharply. It was not Hilliard's voice.

"Sheila—" There was such an agony of fear in the softly spoken syllables, there was such a weight of dread on the breath of the speaker, that for very pity Sheila forgot herself. She got up from the floor and moved dazedly to meet the figure on the threshold. It was dimly outlined against the violet evening light. Sheila came up quite close and put her hands on the tense-hanging arms. They caught her. Then she sobbed and laughed aloud, calling out in her astonishment again and again, softly, incredulously—

"*You*, Dickie? Oh, Dickie, Dickie, it's—you?"

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Sheila and the Stars

HILLIARD'S first messenger had been hindered by death. Several times it seemed that his second messenger would suffer the same grim prevention. But this second messenger was young and set like steel to his purpose. He left the railroad at Millings, hired a horse, crossed the great plain above the town and braved the Pass, dangerous with overbalanced weights of melting snow. There on the lonely Hill he had first encounter with that Arch-Hinderer. A snowslide caught him and he left his horse buried, struggling out himself from the cold smother like a maimed insect, to lie for hours by the road till breath and life came back to him. He got himself on foot to the nearest ranch, and there he hired a fresh horse and reached Rusty, at the end of the third day.

RUSTY was overshadowed by a tragedy. The body of the trapper, Hilliard's first messenger, had been found under the melting snow a few days before, and to the white-faced young stranger was given that stained and withered letter in which Hilliard had excused and explained his desertion. Nothing, at Rusty, had been heard of Sheila. No one knew even that she had ever left Miss Blake's ranch. The history of such lonely places is a sealed book from snowfall until spring. Their tragedies are the dumb tragedies of animal life. No one had ever connected Sheila's name with Hilliard's. No one knew of his plans for her. The trapper had set off without delay, not even going back to his house, some little distance outside of Rusty, to tell his wife that he would be bringing home a lodger with him. There was, to be sure, at the office a small bundle of letters all in the same hand addressed to Miss Arundel. They had to wait, perforce, till the snowbound country was released.

"It's not likely even now," sly and twinkling Lander of the hotel told Dickie, "that you can make it to Miss Blake's place. No, sir, nor to Hilliard's neither. Hidden Creek's up. She's sure some flood this time of the year. It's as much as your life's good for, stranger."

But Dickie merely smiled and got for himself a horse that was "good in deep water." And he rode away from Rusty without looking back.

He rode along a lush wet land of roaring streams, and on the bank of Hidden Creek there was a roaring that drowned even the beating of his heart. The flood straddled across his path like Apollyon.

A dozen times the horse refused the ford—at last, with a desperate toss of his head, he made a plunge for it. Almost at once he was swept from the cobbled bed. He swam sturdily, but the current whirled him down like a straw. Dickie slipped from the saddle on the upper side so that the water pressed him close to the horse, and even when they both went under, he held to the animal with hands like iron. This saved his life. Fifteen blind, black, gasping minutes later the horse pulled him up on the farther bank and they stood trembling together, dazed by life and the warmth of the air.

It was growing dark. The heavy shadow of the mountain fell across them and across the swollen yellow river they had just escaped. There began to be a dappling light—the faint shining of that slim young moon. She was just a silver curl there above the edge of the hill. In an hour she would set. Her brightness was as shy and subtle as the brightness of a smile. The messenger pulled his trembling body to the wet saddle and, looking about for landmarks that had been described to him, he

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found the faint trail to Hilliard's ranch. Presently he made out the low building under its firs. He dropped down, freed the good swimmer and turned him loose, then moved rapidly across the little clearing. It was all so still. Hidden Creek alone made a threatening tumult. Dickie stopped before he came to the door. He stood with his hands clenched at his sides and his chin lifted. He seemed to be speaking to the sky. He stumbled to the door and called,

"Sheila——"

Then she seemed to rise up from the floor and stand before him and put her hands on his arms.

A sort of insanity of joy, of childish excitement, came upon Sheila when she had recognized her visitor. She flitted about the room, she laughed, she talked half wildly—it had been such a long silence—in broken ejaculatory sentences. It was Dickie's dumbness as he leaned against the door looking at her that sobered her at last. She came close to him again and saw that he was shivering and that streams of water were running from his clothes to the floor.

"Why, Dickie! How wet you are!" Again she put her hands on his arms—He was indeed drenched. She looked up into his face. It was gray and drawn in the uncertain light.

"That dreadful river! How did you cross it!"

Dickie smiled.

"It would have taken more than a river to stop me," he said in his old half-demure, half-ironical fashion. And that was all Sheila ever heard of that brief epic of his journey. He drew away from her now and went over to the fire.

"Dickie," she followed him. "Tell me how you came here. How you knew where I was. Wait—I'll get you some of Cosme's clothes—and a cup of tea."

This time, exhausted as he was, Dickie did not fail to stand up to take the cup she brought him. He shook his head at the dry clothes. He didn't want Hilliard's things, thank you; he was drying out nicely by the fire. He wasn't a bit cold. He sat and drank the tea, leaning forward, his elbows on his knees. He was after all just the same, she decided—only more so. His Dickie-ness had increased a hundredfold. There was still that quaint look of having come in from the fairy doings of a midsummer night. Only, now that his color had come back and the light of her lamp shone on him, he had a firmer and more vital look. His sickly pallor had gone, and the blue marks under his eyes—the eyes were fuller, deeper, more brilliant. He was steadier, firmer. He had definitely shed the pitifulness of his childhood. And Sheila did not remember that his mouth had so sweet a firm line from sensitive end to end of the lips.

HER impatience was driving her heart faster at every beat.

"You *must* please tell me everything now, Dickie," she pleaded, sitting on the arm of Hilliard's second chair. Her cheeks burned, her hair, grown to an awkward length, had come loose from a ribbon and fallen about her face and shoulders. She had made herself a frock of orange-colored cotton stuff—something that Hilliard had bought for curtains. It was a startling color enough, but it could not dim her gipsy beauty of wild dark hair and browned skin, with which the misty and spiritual eyes and the slightly straightened and saddened lips made exquisite disharmony.

Dickie looked up at her a minute. He put down his cup and got to his feet. He went to stand by the shelf, half-turned from her.

"Tell me, at least," she begged in a cracked key of suspense, "do you know anything about—*Hilliard?*"

At that Dickie was vividly a victim of remorse.

"Oh—Sheila—Damn! I *am* a beast! Of course—he's all right. Only, you see, he's been hurt and is in the hospital. That's why I came."

"You?—Hilliard?—Dickie? I can't really understand." She pushed back her hair with the same gesture she had used in the studio when Sylvester Hudson's offer of "a job" had set her brain whirling.

"No, of course. You wouldn't." Dickie spoke slowly again, looking at the rug. "I went East——"

"But—Hilliard?"

HE LOOKED up at her and flashed a queer, pained sort of smile. "I am coming to him, Sheila. I've got to tell you *some* about myself before I get around to him or else you wouldn't savvy——"

"Oh!" She couldn't meet the look that went with the queer smile, for it was even queerer and more pained, and was somehow too old a look for Dickie. So she said, "Oh!" again childishly and waited, staring at her fingers.

"I went to New York because I thought I'd find you there, Sheila. Pop's hotel was on fire."

"Did you really burn it down, Dickie?"

He started violently. "*I* burn it down? Good Lord! No! What made you think such a thing?"

"Never mind. Your father thought so."

Dickie's face flushed. "I suppose he would." He thought it over, then shrugged his shoulders. "I didn't. I don't know how it started. I went to New York and to that place you used to live in—the garret. I had the address from the man who took Pop there."

"The studio? *Our* studio?—*You* there, Dickie?"

"Yes, ma'am. I lived there. I thought, at first, you might come. Well—" Dickie hurried as though he wanted to pass quickly over this necessary history of his own experience. "I got a job at a hotel." He smiled faintly. "I was a waiter. One night I went to look at a fire. It was a big fire. I was trying to think out what it was like—you know the way I always did. It used to drive Pop loco. I must have been talking to myself. Anyway, there was a fellow standing near me with a note-book and a pencil and he spoke up suddenly—kind of sharp, and said: 'Say that again, will you?' He was a newspaper reporter, Sheila. That's how I got into the job. But I'm only telling you because——"

Sheila hit the rung of her chair with an impatient foot. "Oh, Dickie! How silly you are! As if I weren't *dying* to hear all about it. How did you get 'into the job'? What job?"

"Reporting," said Dickie. He was troubled by this urgency of hers. He began to stammer a little. "Of course, the—

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the fellow helped me a lot. He got me on the staff. He went round with me. He—he took down what I said and later he—he kind of edited my copy before I handed it in. He—he was almighty good to me. And I—I worked awfully hard. Like hell. Night-classes when I wasn't on night duty, and books. Then, Sheila, I began to get kind of crazy over words." His eyes kindled, and his face. He straightened. He forgot himself whatever it was that weighed upon him. "Aren't they wonderful? They're like polished stones—each one a different shape and color and feel. You fit 'em this way and that and turn 'em and—all at once, they shine and sing. God! I never knowed what was the matter with me till I began to work with words—and that *is* work, Sheila! Lord! How you hate them, and love them, and curse them and worship them. I used to think I wanted *whisky*." He laughed scorn at that old desire, then came to self-consciousness again and was shamefaced—"I guess you think I am plumb out of my head," he apologized. "You see, it was because I was a—a reporter, Sheila, that I happened to be there when Hilliard was hurt. I was coming home from the night courts. It was down-town. At a street corner, there was a crowd. Somebody told me: 'Young Hilliard's car ran into a milk cart, turned turtle. He's hurt.' Well, of course, I knew it'd be a good story—all that about Hilliard and his millions and his coming from the West to get his inheritance—it had just come out a couple of months before."

"His millions?" repeated Sheila. She slipped off the arm of his chair without turning her wide look from Dickie and sat down with an air of deliberate sobriety. "His inheritance?" she repeated.

"Yes, ma'am. That's what took him East. He had news at Rusty. He wrote you a letter and sent it by a man who was to fetch you to Rusty. You were to stay there with his wife till Hilliard would be coming back for you. But, Sheila, the man was caught in a trap and buried by a blizzard. They found him only about a week ago—with Hilliard's letter in his pocket." Dickie fumbled in his own steaming coat. "Here it is. I've got it."

"Don't give it to me yet," she said. "Go on."

"WELL," Dickie turned the shriveled and stained paper lightly in restless fingers, "that morning in New York, I got up close to the car and had my notebook out. Hilliard was waiting for the ambulance. His ribs were smashed and his arm broken. He was conscious. He was laughing and talking and smoking cigarets. I asked him some questions and he took a notion to question *me*. 'You're from the West,' he said, and when I told him 'Millings' he kind of gasped and sat up. That turned him faint. But when they were carrying him off, he got a hold of my hand and whispered, 'Come see me at the hospital.' I was willing enough—I went. And they took me to him. Private room. And a nice-looking nurse. And flowers. He has lots of friends in New York, Hilliard, you bet you." It was irony again and Sheila stirred nervously. That changed his tone.

He moved abruptly and came and sat down near her, locking his hands and bending his head to study them in the old way. "He found out who I was and he told me

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about you, Sheila, and because he was too much hurt to travel or even to write, he asked me to go out and carry a message for him. Nothing would have kept me from going anyway," Dickie added quaintly. "When I learned what had been happening and how you were left and no letters coming from Rusty to answer his—Well, sir, I could hardly sit still to hear about all that, Sheila. But anyway—" Dickie moved his hands; they sought the arms of his chair and the fingers tightened. He looked past Sheila. "He told me then how it was with you and him. That you were planning to be married. And I promised to find you and tell you what he said."

"What did he say?"

Dickie spoke carefully, using his strange gift. With every word his face grew a trifle whiter, but that had no effect upon his eloquence. He painted a vivid and touching picture of the shattered and wistful youth. He repeated the shaken words of remorse and love. " 'I want her to come East and marry me. I love her. Tell her I love her. Tell her I can give her everything she wants in all the world. Tell her to come—' " And, far more skilfully than ever Hilliard himself could, Dickie pleaded the intoxication of that sudden shower of gold, the bewildering change in the young waif's life, the necessity he was under to go and see and touch the miracle. There was a long silence after Dickie had delivered himself of the burden of his promise. The fire leaped and crackled on Hilliard's forsaken hearth. It threw shadows and gleams across Dickie's thin, exhausted face and Sheila's inscrutably thoughtful one.

SHE held out her hand.

"Give me the letters now, Dickie."

He handed her the bundle that had accumulated in Rusty and the little withered one taken from the body of the trapper. Sheila took them and held them on her knee. She pressed both her hands against her eyes, then leaning toward the fire she read the letters, beginning with that one that had spent so many months under the dumb snow.

Berg, who had investigated Dickie, leaned against her knee while she read, his eyes fixed upon her. She read and laid the pile by on the table behind her. She sat for a long while, elbows on the arms of her chair, fingers laced beneath her chin. She seemed to be looking at the fire, but she was watching Dickie through her eyelashes. There was no ease in his attitude. He had his arms folded, his hands gripped the damp sleeves of his coat. When she spoke, he jumped as though she had fired a gun.

"It is not true, Dickie, that things were —were that way between Cosme and me. We had not settled to be married—" She paused and saw that he forced himself to sit quiet. "Do you really think," she said, "that the man that wrote those letters loves me?" Dickie was silent. He would not meet her look. "So you promised Hilliard that you would take me back to marry him?" There was an edge to her voice.

Dickie's face burned cruelly. "No," he said with shortness. "I was going to take you to the train and then come back here. I am going to take up this claim of Hilliard's. He's through with it. He likes the East. You see, Sheila, he's got the

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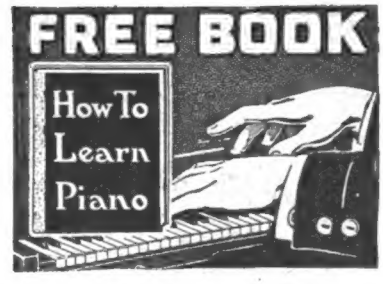

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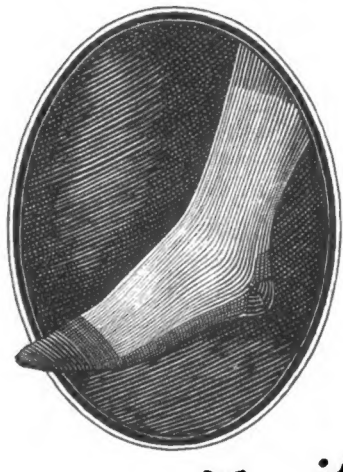

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whole world to play with. It's quite true." Dickie said this gravely, insistently. "He can give you everything——"

"And you?"

Dickie stared at her with parted lips. He seemed afraid to breathe, lest he startle away some hesitant hope. "I?" he whispered.

"I mean—*you* don't like the East?—You will give up your work?"

"Oh—" he dropped back. The hope had flown and he was able to breathe again, though breathing seemed to hurt. "Yes, ma'am. I'll give up newspaper reporting. I don't like New York."

"But Dickie—your—words? I'd like to see something you've written."

Dickie's hand went to an inner pocket. "I wanted you to see this, Sheila." His eyes were lowered to hide a flaming pride. "My *poems*."

Sheila felt a shock of dread. Dickie's *poems!* She was afraid to read them. She could not help but think of his life at Millings, of that sordid hotel-lobby. Newspaper stories—yes—that was imaginable. But—poetry? Sheila had been brought up on verse. There was hardly a beautiful line that had not sung itself into the fabric of her brain.

"Poems?" she repeated, just a trifle blankly, then seeing the hurt in his face about the sensitive and delicate lips, she put out a quick, penitent hand. "Let me see them—at once!"

He handed a few folded papers to her. They were damp. He put his face down to his hands and looked at the floor as though he could not bear to watch her face. Sheila saw that he was shaking. It meant so much to him then? She unfolded the papers shrinkingly and read. As she read, the blood rushed to her cheeks for shame. She ought never to have doubted him. Never, after the first look into his face, never after hearing him speak of the "cold white flame" of an unforgotten winter night. Dickie's words, so greatly loved and groped for, so tirelessly pursued in the face of his world's scorn and injury, came to him when they did come, on wings. In the four short poems, there was not a word outside of his inner experience, and yet she felt that those words had blown through him mysteriously on a wind—the wind that fans such flame—

Oh small song you sang to me
A hundred hundred days ago,
Oh small song whose melody
Walks in my heart and stumbles so;
I can not bear the level nights,
And all the moons are over-long,
And all the hours from sun to sun
Turn to a little song—

Like the beat of the falling rain,
Until there seems no roof at all,
And my heart is washed with pain—

Why is a woman's throat a bird,
White in the thicket of the years?

Sheila suddenly thrust back the leaves at him, hid her face, and fell to crying bitterly. Dickie let fall his poems; he hovered over her, utterly bewildered, utterly distressed.

"Sheila—h-how could they possibly hurt you so? It was your song—your song—Are you angry with me—? I couldn't help it. It kept singing in me. It—it hurt."

She thrust his hand away.

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"Don't be kind to me. Oh—I am ashamed. I've treated you *so*. And—and snubbed you. And—and condescended to you, Dickie. And shamed you. You—! And you can write such lines—and you are great—you will be very great— A poet, Dickie, why couldn't I see? Father would have seen. Don't touch me please! I can't bear it. Oh, my dear, you must have been through such long, long misery—there in Millings, behind that desk—all stifled and cramped and shut in. And when I came, I might have helped you. I might have understood. But I hurt you more."

"Please don't Sheila—it isn't true. Oh, *damn* my poems!"

This made her laugh a little, and she got up and dried her eyes and sat before him like a humbled child. It was quite terrible for Dickie. His face was drawn with the discomfort of it. He moved about the room, miserable and restless.

Sheila recovered herself and looked up at him with a sort of wan resolution.

"And you will stay here and work the ranch and write, Dickie?"

"Yes, ma'am." He managed a smile. "If you think a fellow can push a plow and write poetry with the same hand."

"It's been done before. And—and you will send me back to Hilliard and—the good old world?"

Dickie's artificial smile left him. He stood white and stiff, looking down at her. He tried to speak and put his hand to his throat.

"And I must leave you here," Sheila went on softly, "with my stars?"

She got up and walked over to the door and stood half-turned from him, her fingers playing with the latch.

Dickie found part of his voice.

"What do you mean, Sheila, about your stars?"

"You told me," she said carefully, "that you would go and work and then come back—but, I suppose——"

That was as far as she got. Dickie flung himself across the room. A chair crashed. He had his arms about her. He was shaking. That pale and tender light was in his face. The whiteness of a full moon, the whiteness of a dawn seemed to fall over Sheila.

"He—he can give you everything—" Dickie said shakily.

"I've been waiting—" she said. "I didn't know it until lately. But I've been waiting, so long now for—for—" She closed her eyes and lifted her soft sad mouth. It was no longer patient.

THAT night Dickie and Berg lay together on the hide before the fire, wrapped in a blanket. Dickie did not sleep. He looked through the uncurtained horizontal window, at the stars.

"You've got everything else, Hilliard," he muttered. "You've got the whole world to play with. After all, it was your own choice. I told you how it was with me. I promised I'd play fair. I did play fair." He played with the dog's rough mane. "She'll keep on looking at the stars," he murmured. "But I'll keep on looking at her—*Sheila*."

But Sheila, having made her choice, had shut her eyes to the world and to the stars and slept like a good and happy child.

THE END.

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